

FOR 35 YEARS... THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HERO!!

ACTION

DC
COMICS

IN THIS
ISSUE:

ACTION-PLUS WITH:

The **ATOM**

20¢
NO. 427
SEPT.
30410

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BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

ACTION COMICS

MY
FRIENDS,
I'D LIKE TO
INTRODUCE A
FAR GREATER
HERO THAN
SUPERMAN
EVER WAS--

--OR
EVER WILL
BE!

THE MOST
STARTLING
STORY
YOU EVER
READ...

**"THE MAN
WHO NEVER
LIVED!"**

SUPERMAN
HAS FREAKED
OUT!

GREAT
CAESAR'S
GHOST!
IS THIS A
HOAX?

THERE'S
NO ONE
EVEN
THERE!



CHARLES ATLAS, World's No. 1 Body Builder, says:

Don't Be Half A Man!

Let ME SHOW How I Can Make You a Real HE-MAN From Head to Toe — in Just 15

Minutes a Day! Take a good honest look at yourself! Are you proud of your body — or are you satisfied to go through life being just "half the man" you could be? No matter how ashamed you are of your present physical condition — or how old or young you are — the "sleeping" muscles already present in your body can turn you into a real HE-MAN! Believe me, I know — because I was once a skinny, scrawny 97-pound half-alive weakling! People used to laugh at my build and make fun of me. I was ashamed to strip for sports or the beach . . . shy of girls . . . afraid of healthy competition.

HOW I CHANGED FROM A "MOUSE" TO A MAN!

One day, I discovered a secret that changed me from a timid, frightened scarecrow into "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man" — a "magic formula" that can help turn you, too, into a marvellous physical specimen . . . a real HE-MAN from head to toe . . . a man who STANDS OUT in any crowd! What's my secret? "DYNAMIC-TENSION" — the natural method! No theory. No gadgets or contraptions. You just do as I did. Simply take the "sleeping" muscles already present inside your own body — build them up — use them every day in walking, bending over, reaching, even sitting! Almost before you know it, you're covered with a brand-new suit of beautiful, rock-hard SOLID MUSCLE!

MY SECRET BUILDS MUSCLES FAST!

Just 15 minutes each day in the privacy of your room is all it takes to make your chest and shoulder muscles swell so big they almost split your coat seams . . . turn your fists into sledge-hammers . . . build mighty legs that never tire! Mail coupon today for my famous book showing how "Dynamic-Tension" can give you a Body by Atlas. Charles Atlas, Dept. 81J 115 E. 23 St., New York, N. Y. 10010.

Charles Atlas



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- BARATS
- BOXING
- WRESTLING
- FRATS OF STRENGTH
- HAND BALANCING

DO YOU WANT...

A DEEP CHEST?
I can add SOLID INCHES of powerful muscle to your chest — make you look and feel like a dynamo.



BIG ARM MUSCLES?
You'll see and feel your arm muscles BULGE out with super power and energy.



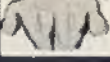
TIRELESS LEGS?
I make your legs strong and powerful with the tireless drive of a long distance runner.



MAGNETIC PERSONALITY?
"Dynamic-Tension" makes you alive with vitality — the husky that men respect and women admire.



BROAD SHOULDERS?
"Dynamic-Tension" will broaden your shoulders. You'll see and feel RE-SULTS IN 7 DAYS!



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You'll put on pounds in the right places. "Dynamic-Tension" rebuilds you inside and out.



My 32-page illustrated book, Charles Atlas, 115 East 23 St., N. Y. 10010.

CHARLES ATLAS ON TV



THE INSULT THAT MADE A MAN OUT OF 'MAC'



...THEN MAIL THIS NOW!

- HERE'S THE KIND OF BODY I WANT
- ☐ MORE MUSCLE — BIGGER CHEST
 - ☐ BIG ARM MUSCLES
 - ☐ BROAD BACK & SHOULDERS
 - ☐ TIRELESS LEGS
 - ☐ MORE WEIGHT
 - ☐ MAGNETIC PERSONALITY

CHARLES ATLAS

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I enclose 10¢. Show me how "Dynamic-Tension" can make me a new man. Send your famous 32-page book, full of pictures, valuable advice. No obligation.

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Address.....

City & State..... Zip Code.....

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ANOTHER ACTION-PACKED SAGA IN THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF

SUPERMAN

FIRST, HE WAS A
YOUNGSTER KIDNAPED
BY ENEMY AGENTS
IN THE 21ST CENTURY...

THEN, HE BECAME
A DEADLY
ASSASSIN--
TRAINED HOW
TO THINK-TO-
KILL...

NEXT, HE WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A HIDEOUS
FLYING NIGHTMARE--A CREATURE DREADED
BY ALL!

AND FINALLY-- HE BECAME...

"THE MAN WHO NEVER LIVED!"

STORY: CARY BATES

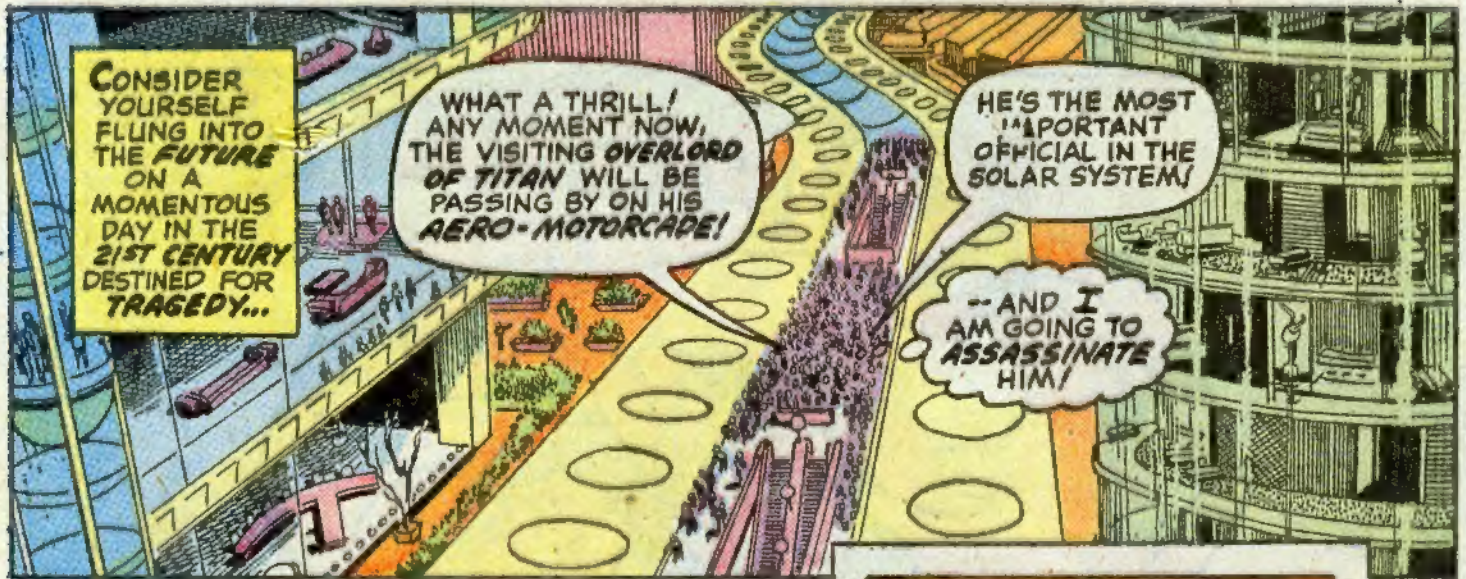
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CONSIDER YOURSELF FLING INTO THE **FUTURE** ON A MOMENTOUS DAY IN THE **21ST CENTURY** DESTINED FOR **TRAGEDY...**

WHAT A THRILL! ANY MOMENT NOW, THE VISITING **OVERLORD OF TITAN** WILL BE PASSING BY ON HIS **AERO-MOTORCADE!**

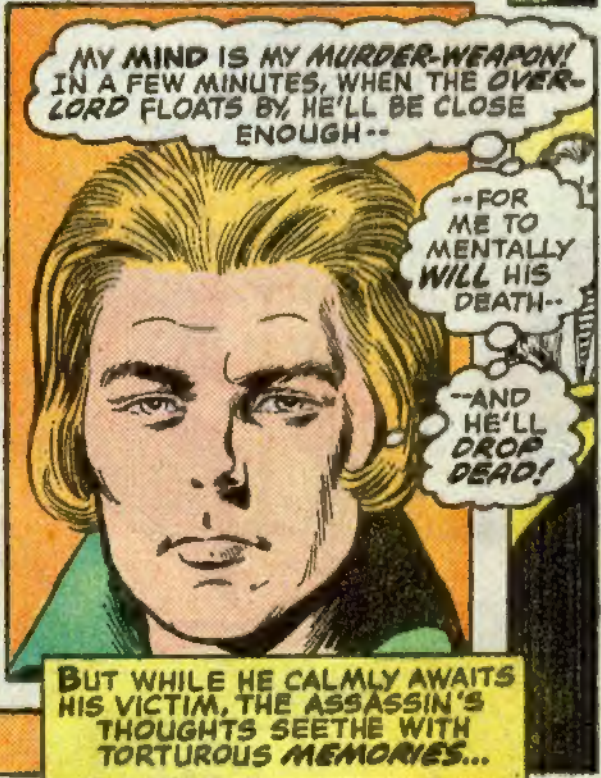
HE'S THE MOST **IMPORTANT OFFICIAL** IN THE **SOLAR SYSTEM!**

--AND I AM GOING TO **ASSASSINATE HIM!**



NOT THAT I WANT TO... BUT I'VE NO CHOICE! I HAVE BEEN **PROGRAMMED** TO KILL HIM!

YET NO ONE WILL **SEE MY CRIME...** BECAUSE I'LL EXECUTE HIM WITHOUT EVEN **LIFTING A FINGER!**



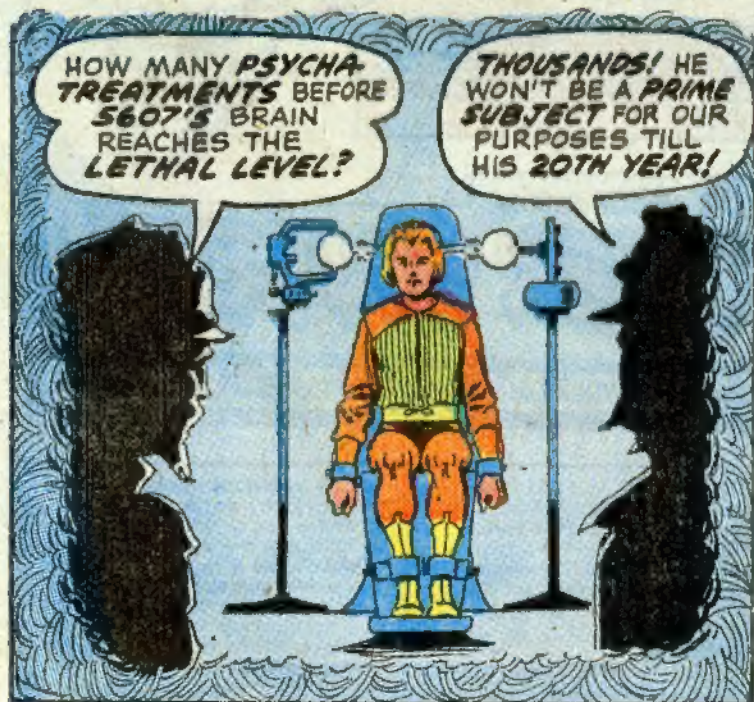
MY MIND IS MY **MURDER-WEAPON!** IN A FEW MINUTES, WHEN THE **OVERLORD** FLOATS BY, HE'LL BE CLOSE ENOUGH--

--FOR ME TO **MENTALLY WILL HIS DEATH--**

--AND HE'LL **DROP DEAD!**

BUT WHILE HE CALMLY AWAITS HIS VICTIM, THE ASSASSIN'S THOUGHTS SEETHE WITH **TORTUROUS MEMORIES...**

... MEMORIES OF HOW **SECRET AGENTS** SNATCHED HIM FROM HIS PARENTS AS A YOUNGSTER, AND GAVE HIM A **NUMBER** INSTEAD OF A **NAME...**



HOW MANY **PSYCHA-TREATMENTS** BEFORE **S607'S** BRAIN REACHES THE **LETHAL LEVEL?**

THOUSANDS! HE WON'T BE A **PRIME SUBJECT** FOR OUR PURPOSES TILL HIS **20TH YEAR!**

... MEMORIES OF THE **JOLTING TREATMENTS** WHICH ROBBED THE LAD OF HIS OWN MIND-- AND LEFT IT IN **COMPLETE CONTROL** OF **OTHERS...**



YOU HAVE **NO WILL** OF YOUR OWN, **S607!**

WE ARE YOUR **ONLY MASTERS!**

DIS-OBEDIENCE IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU!

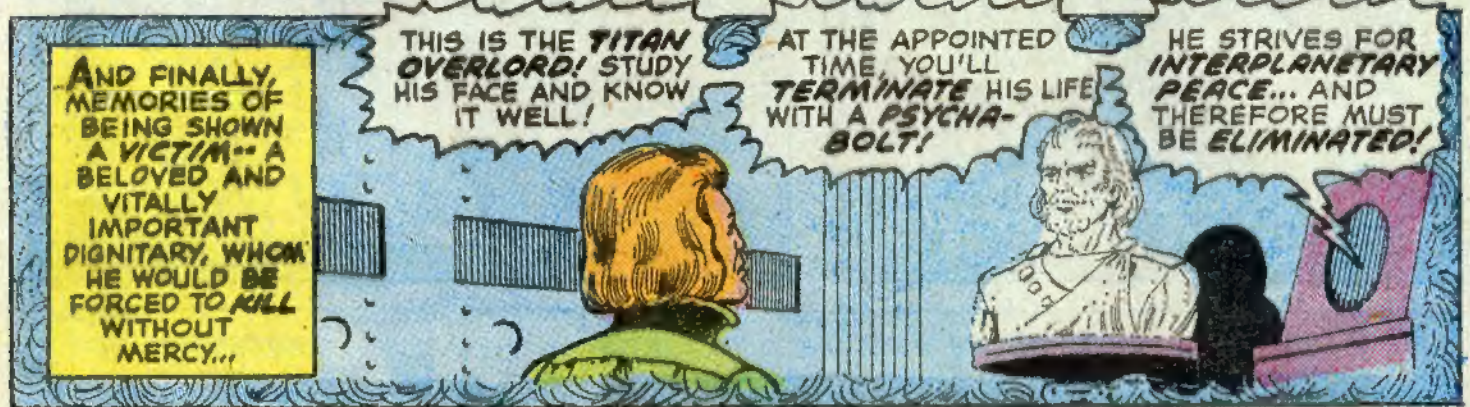


MEMORIES OF DEVELOPING, DEVASTATING POWER-- POWER HE COULD ONLY WIELD UNDER ORDERS...

SPLENDID, 5607! YOUR INVISIBLE PSYCHA-BOLT WAS RIGHT ON TARGET!

THIS AGENT WOULD BE MY TARGET... IF I HAD ANY VOLUNTARY CONTROL OF MY OWN!

BUT I'M HELPLESS... ABLE ONLY TO OBEY THEIR EVIL COMMANDS!

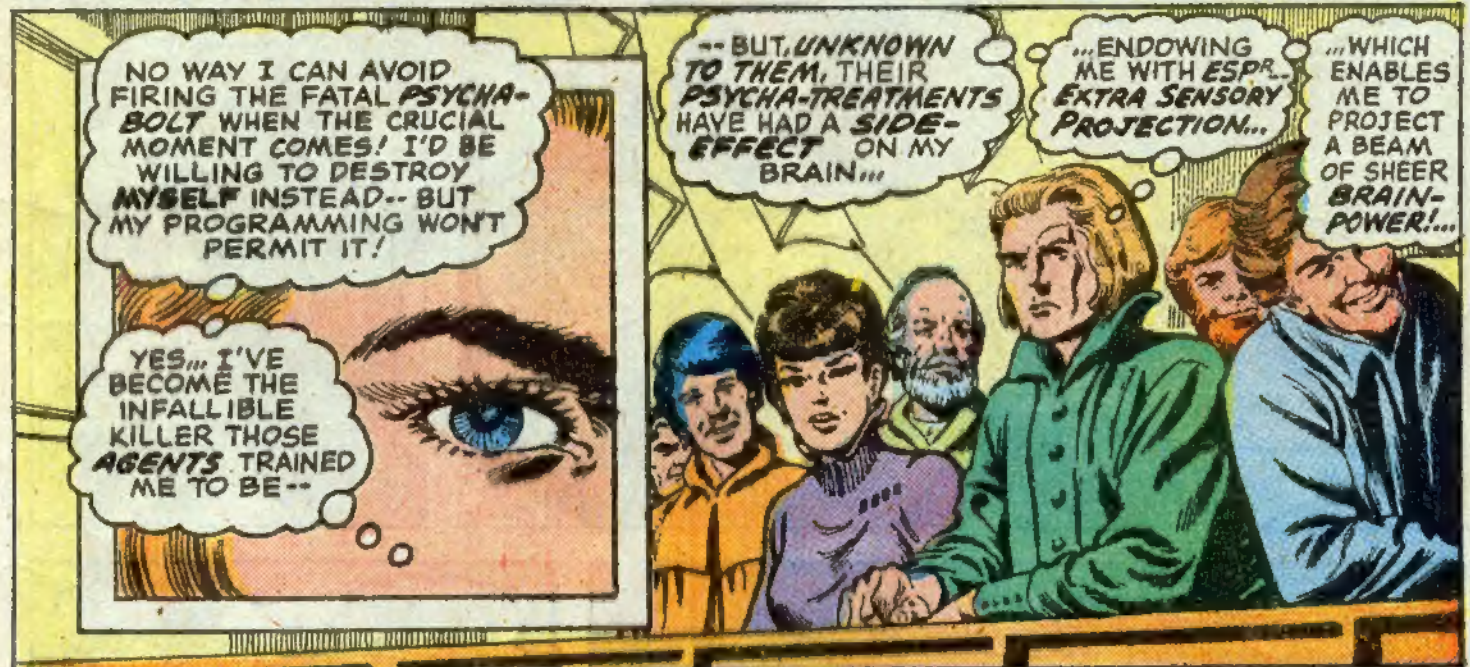


AND FINALLY, MEMORIES OF BEING SHOWN A VICTIM-- A BELOVED AND VITALLY IMPORTANT DIGNITARY, WHOM HE WOULD BE FORCED TO KILL WITHOUT MERCY...

THIS IS THE TITAN OVERLORD! STUDY HIS FACE AND KNOW IT WELL!

AT THE APPOINTED TIME, YOU'LL TERMINATE HIS LIFE WITH A PSYCHA-BOLT!

HE STRIVES FOR INTERPLANETARY PEACE... AND THEREFORE MUST BE ELIMINATED!



NO WAY I CAN AVOID FIRING THE FATAL PSYCHA-BOLT WHEN THE CRUCIAL MOMENT COMES! I'D BE WILLING TO DESTROY MYSELF INSTEAD-- BUT MY PROGRAMMING WON'T PERMIT IT!

YES... I'VE BECOME THE INFALLIBLE KILLER THOSE AGENTS TRAINED ME TO BE--

-- BUT, UNKNOWN TO THEM, THEIR PSYCHA-TREATMENTS HAVE HAD A SIDE-EFFECT ON MY BRAIN...

... ENDOWING ME WITH ESP-- EXTRA SENSORY PROJECTION...

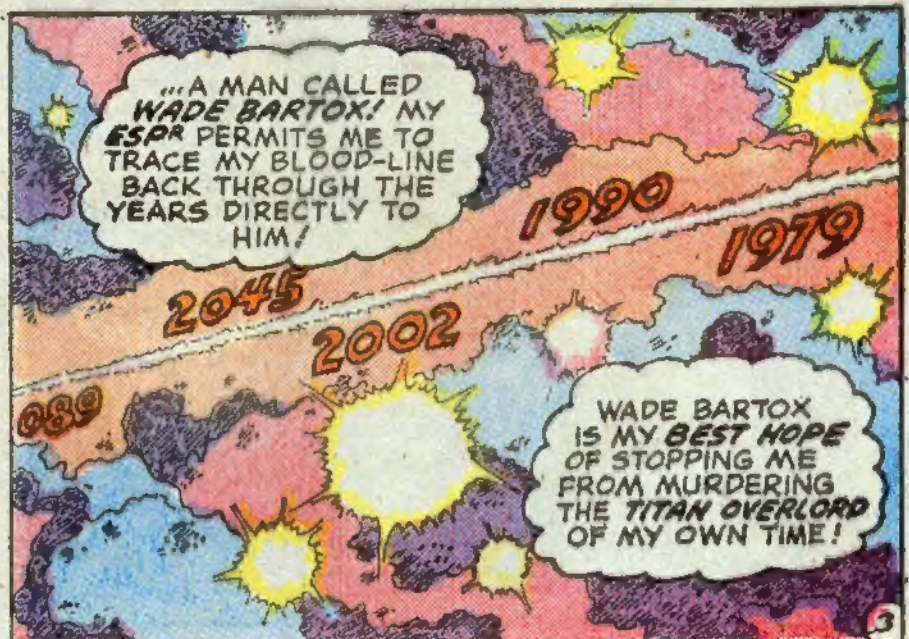
... WHICH ENABLES ME TO PROJECT A BEAM OF SHEER BRAIN-POWER!...



... A BEAM COMPOSED OF MY MENTAL ESSENCE, HEADING FOR A DESTINATION OVER A HUNDRED YEARS AWAY--

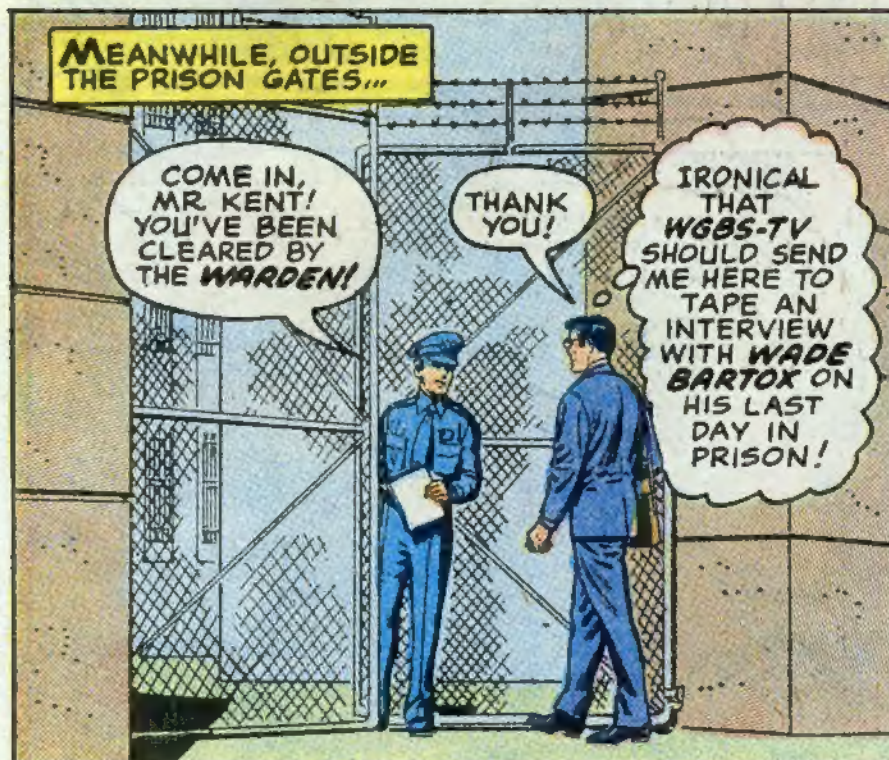
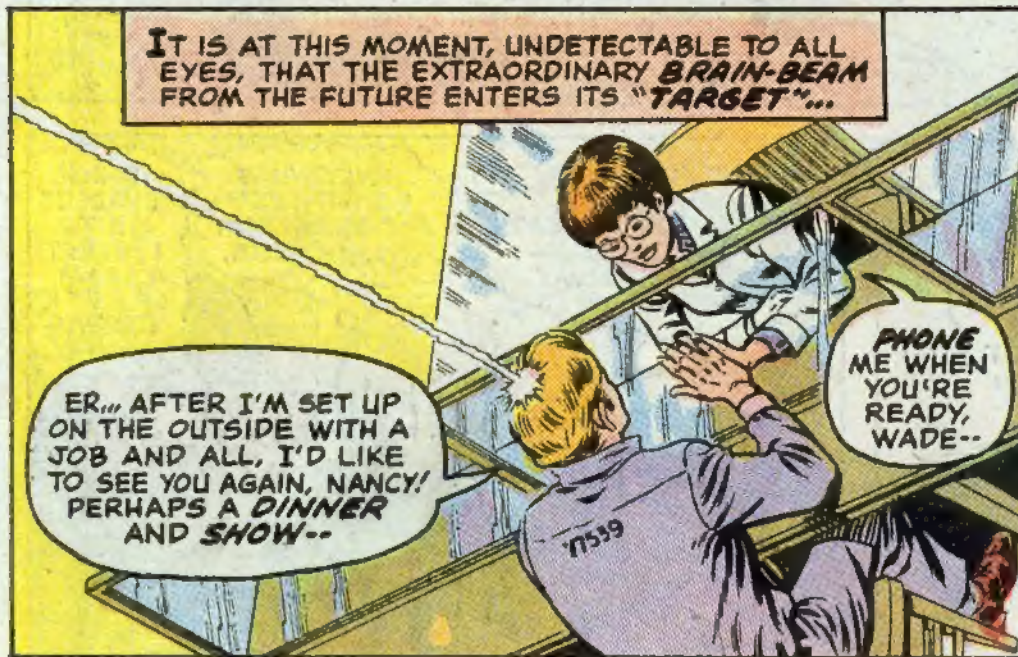
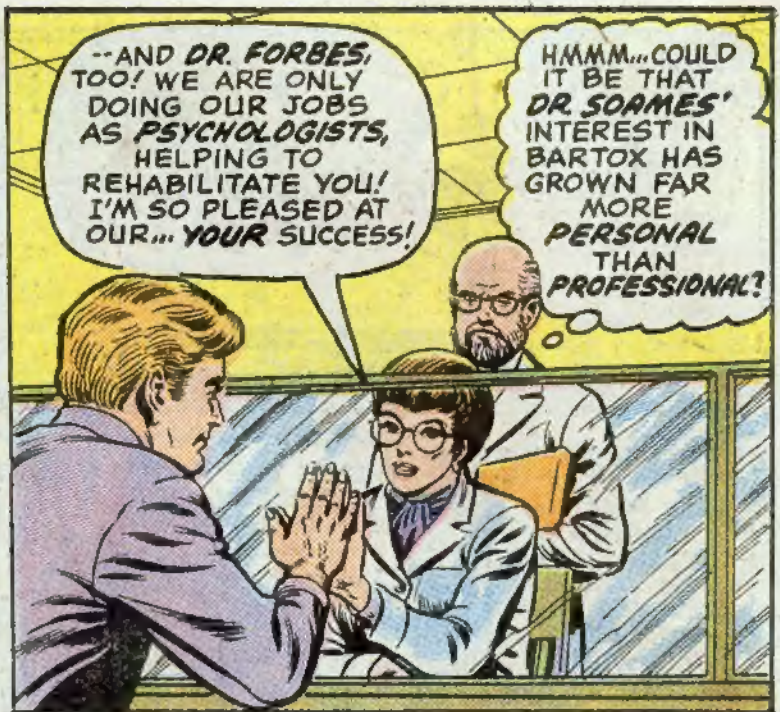
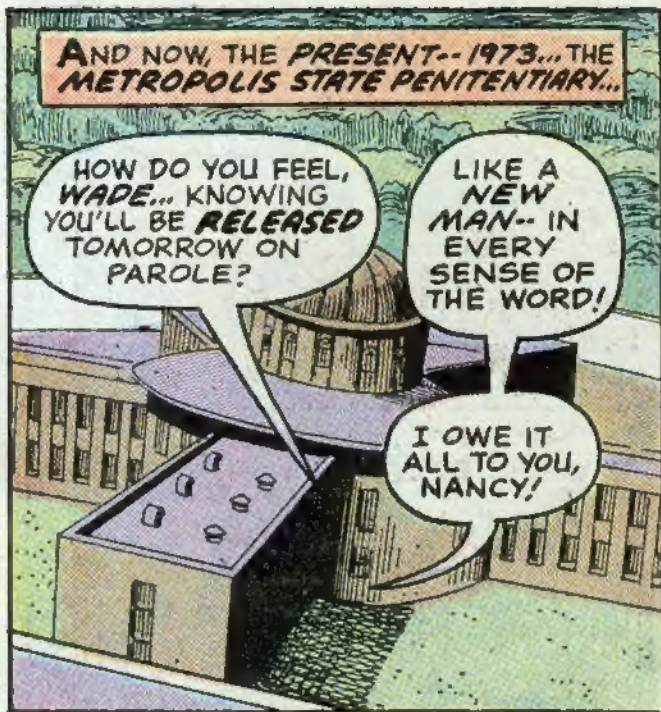
-- INTO THE PAST... BACK TO 1973!

THERE I'LL CONTACT MY DIRECT ANCESTOR...



... A MAN CALLED WADE BARTOX! MY ESP PERMITS ME TO TRACE MY BLOOD-LINE BACK THROUGH THE YEARS DIRECTLY TO HIM!

WADE BARTOX IS MY BEST HOPE OF STOPPING ME FROM MURDERING THE TITAN OVERLORD OF MY OWN TIME!



NOW THERE ARE 14 PREHISTORICTM SCENES. THEY'RE THE HOTTEST THING SINCE THE ICE AGE.



PrehistoricTM Scene kits from Aurora. There are six brand new ones for '73. Realistic looking kits that you just snap together! You can even paint them! Start building your own Prehistoric world today..

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EXPLOSIVELY, THE
NEXT MOMENT!...

CRASHHHH

SOUND
THE ALARM!
SOMEONE'S
ESCAPING
FROM
BUILDING
THREE!

GREAT STARS!
"SOMETHING"
IS MORE LIKE
IT! I SAW IT
CRASH THROUGH
THE SOLID
CONCRETE ROOF--
AS IF THE ROOF
WERE MADE OF
PEANUT
BRITTLE!

-- WHICH
MAKES THIS
A JOB FOR
SUPERMAN!

G-GOTTA
HIDE... OR
THAT
HIDEOUS
CREATURE
MIGHT
ATTACK
ME!

LOOK AT
THAT REPORTER,
KENT-JUMPING
INTO THE BACK
OF A PRISON
VAN FOR
COVER!

YEAH...
TO COVER
HIS COWARD'S
STREAK!

AN INSTANT LATER, OUT OF THE
VAN BURSTS THE SUPER-SPEED
STREAK OF THE WORLD'S
GREATEST SUPER-HERO!...

...AND
WHY
IT'S
HERE!

...MAYBE I'LL
DISCOVER
WHERE IT
CAME FROM...

IF I CAN
FIND OUT WHAT
THAT FLYING
TERROR REALLY
IS...

WHEW! THIS THING
IS UGLY AND FEARSOME
ENOUGH TO KEEP EVEN
A MARINE COMMANDO
AWAKE AT NIGHT!

MY FISTS SHOULD
"GROUND" IT IN A
HURRY!



HUH?! THE CREATURE'S VANISHED OUT FROM UNDER ME!

WHERE COULD IT--

ARRGGHHH

NOW I'M THE UNDERDOG! AND UNDER STABBING PAIN... DESPITE MY INVULNERABILITY!



UHHH... MONSTER STILL DIGGING INTO MY BACK WITH A DEATH-LIKE GRIP!

BETTER POUR ON MORE *SUPER-SPEED*... TO SHAKE OFF MY ATTACKER!



FASTER, EVER FASTER... UNTIL THE SEARING EFFECTS OF AIR-FRICTION SUDDENLY TAKE A SHOCKING TOLL...

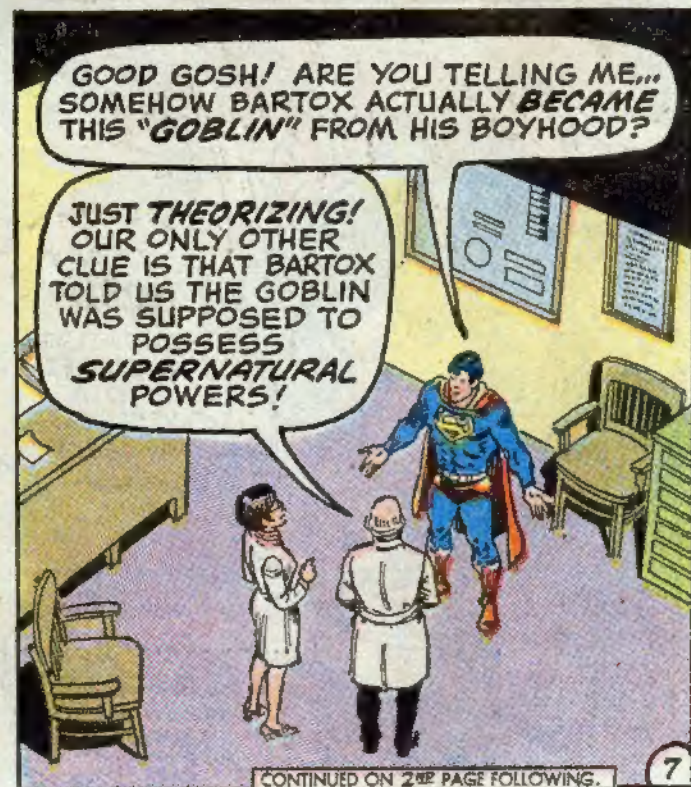
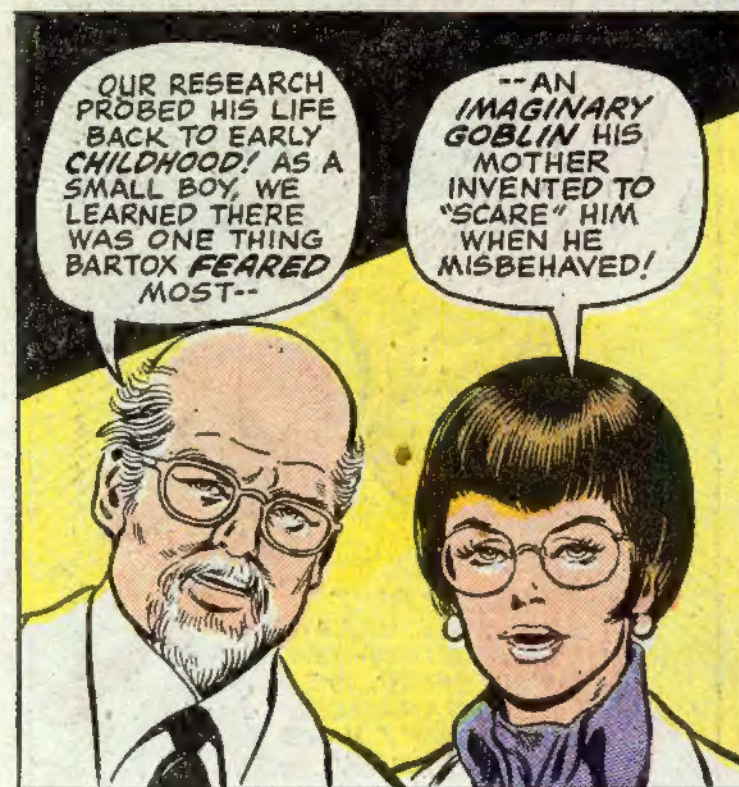
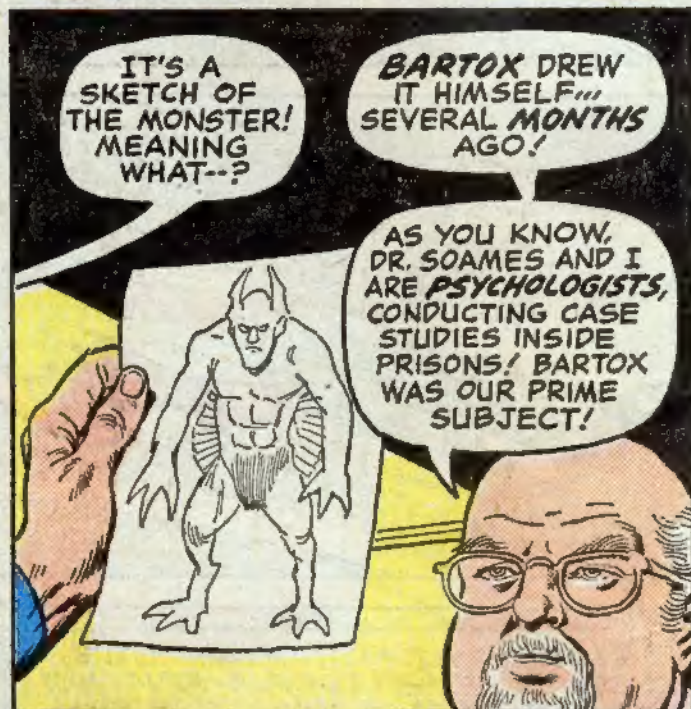
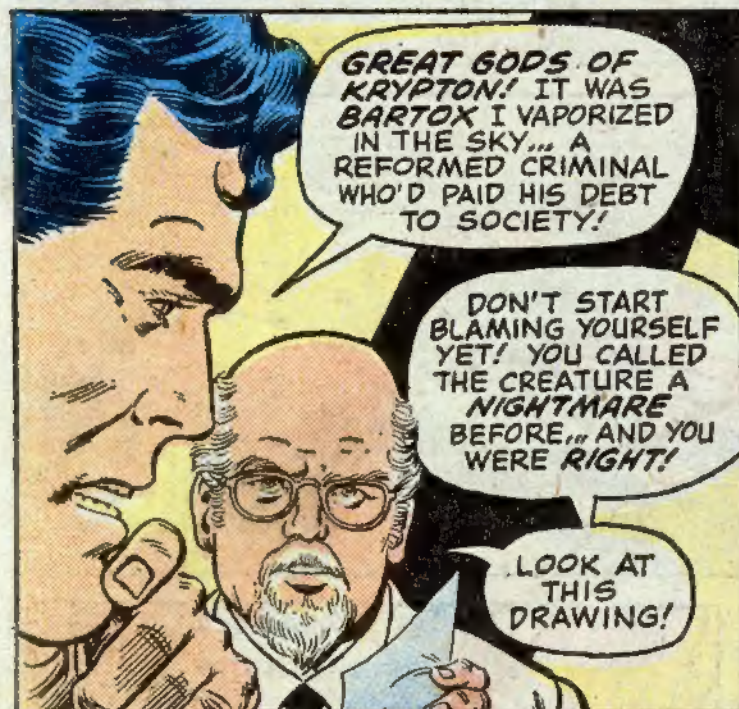
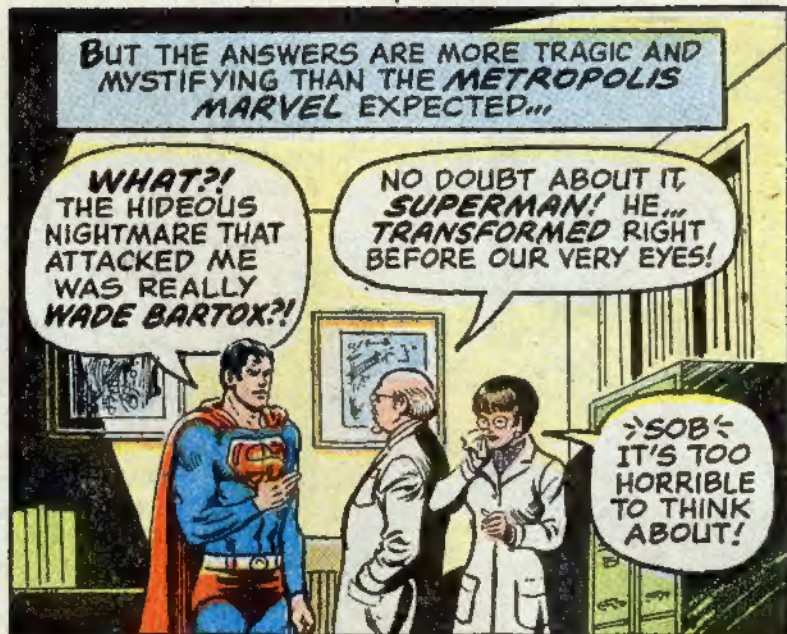
GREAT KRYPTON! THE CREATURE IGNITED INTO A BURST OF FLAME!

BUT I ONLY MEANT TO SCORCH IT A LITTLE... JUST ENOUGH TO WEAKEN IT...



THE THING IS FLARING UP LIKE A HUNDRED ROMAN CANDLES!

I COULDN'T HAVE MIS-CALCULATED THE FRICTION-HEAT OF MY SPEED... SO WHAT HAPPENED, SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED!



You Receive - A COMPLETE GAME

88 FIGHTING MEN in all Battle positions and fully equipped with: Back packs, field glasses, helmets, canteens, rifles, grenades, mortars and shells, machine guns, bayonets or flame throwers. All in 3-D unbreakable plastic.

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COMBAT CALCULATOR - to determine troop casualties - advances - retreats. SIMPLE DIRECTIONS FOR COMMANDERS 8 TO 80.

You're poised on a wooded slope overlooking a strange deserted town. It was peaceful as a post card until you spotted enemy troops moving in. Now this town will be torn apart as it becomes the arena for this house to house battle.

Each minute could seem an eternity as you leave the woods edge and run for the protection of the houses. But out in the open, one false step could be your last. That strange feeling in your guts is back. But you see your hand rise and hear your voice cry **MOVE OUT - ATTACK!**

WOODS EDGE GAME

**TANKS ACTUALLY
EXPLODING
BLOWING APART RIGHT OFF THE
PANORAMIC BATTLE FIELD**

1.69
PLUS POSTAGE

A tank is a crawling, armored skinned, the spitting, man eating monster that breaths on any hapless enemy. But it can be stopped with courage and daring. You're the "live bait" in this.

TANK TRAP

★ A COMPLETE GAME WITH

★ 64 COMBAT MEN

★ H.Q. COMMANDER

★ 25 TANK MINES

★ 6 EXPLODING TANKS

★ HUGE BATTLE FIELD

★ 2 TANK BARRIERS

★ SIMPLE DIRECTIONS

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☐ WOODS EDGE COMPLETE GAME - \$1.69

☐ SPECIAL!! Complete game plus 6 extra soldiers (total of 176 soldiers) - \$2.39

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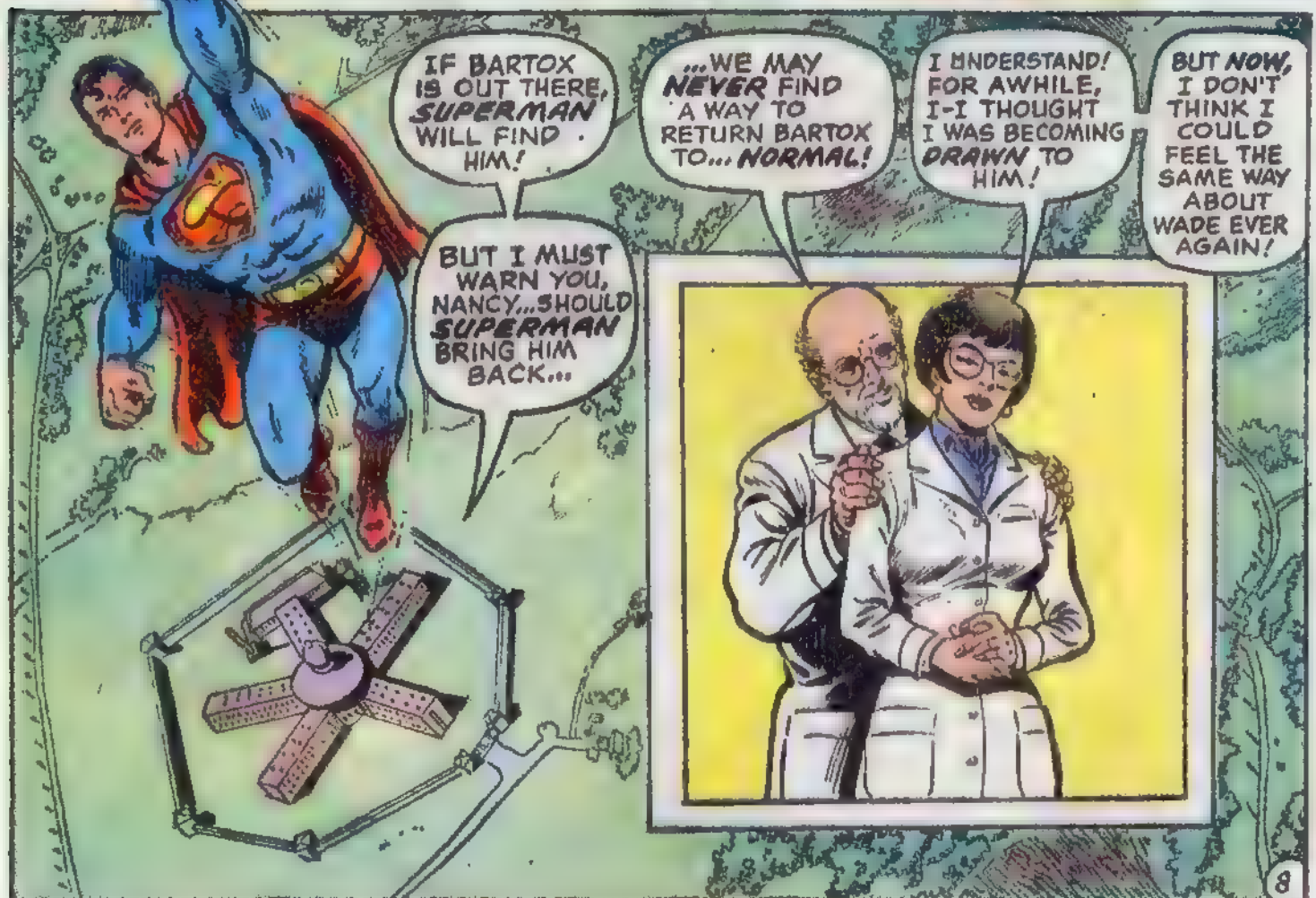
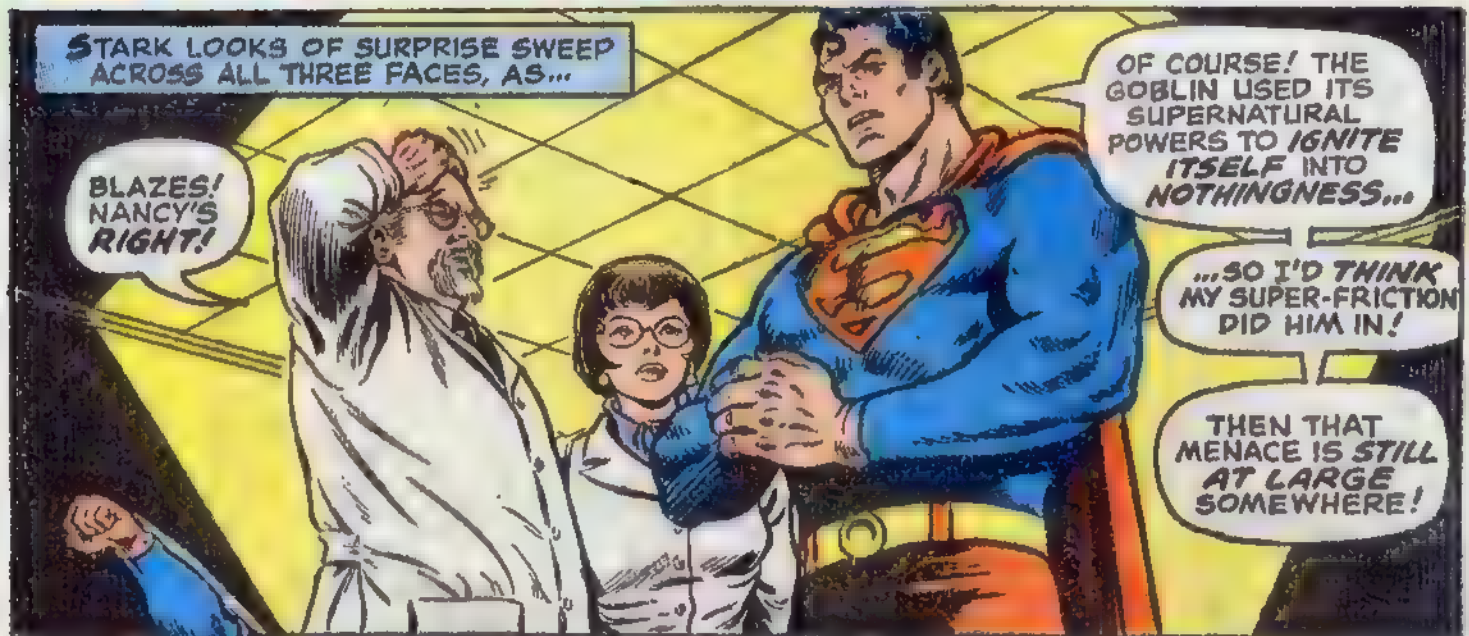
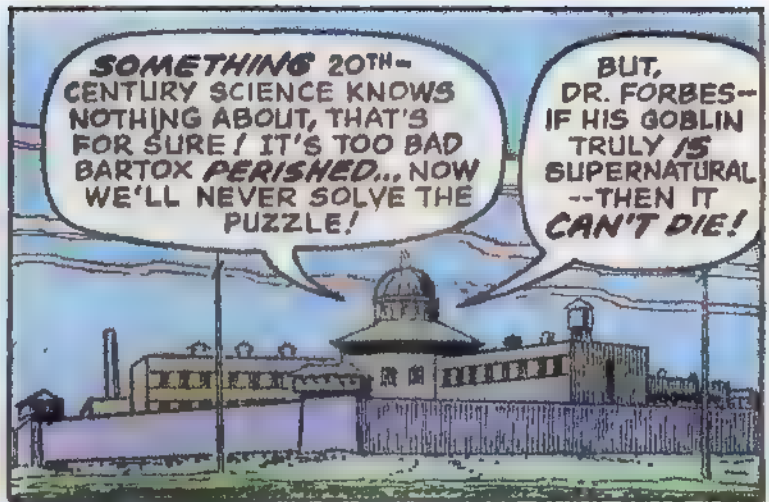
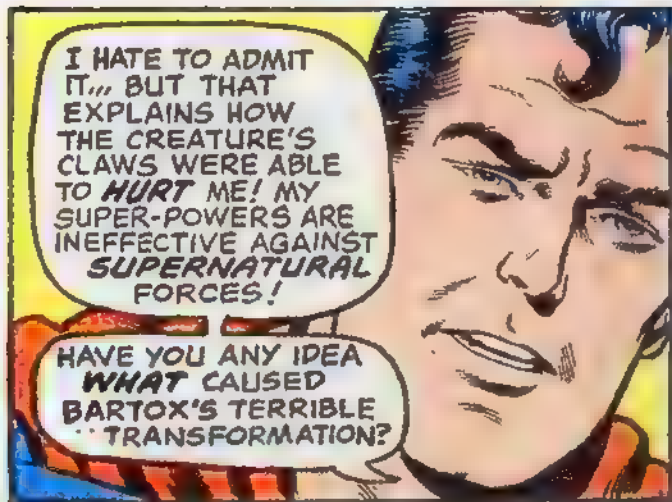
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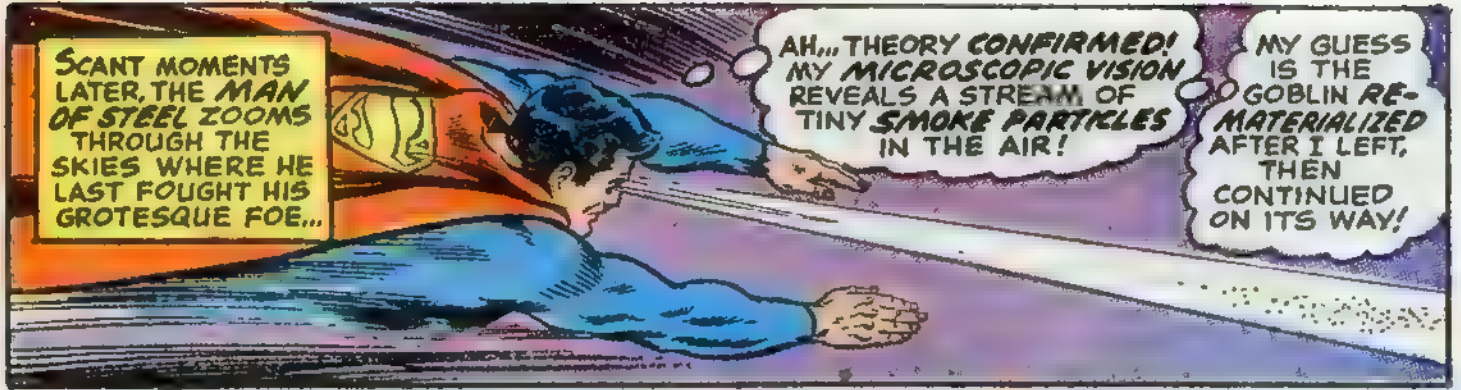
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ORDER TODAY TO RECEIVE FREE! A "CHESS" GAME PLUS A CATALOG WITH EACH ORDER - Please don't delay your order(s) by forgetting to ADD POSTAGE to price on EACH of the items ordered





SCANT MOMENTS LATER, THE **MAN OF STEEL** ZOOMS THROUGH THE SKIES WHERE HE LAST FOUGHT HIS GROTESQUE FOE...

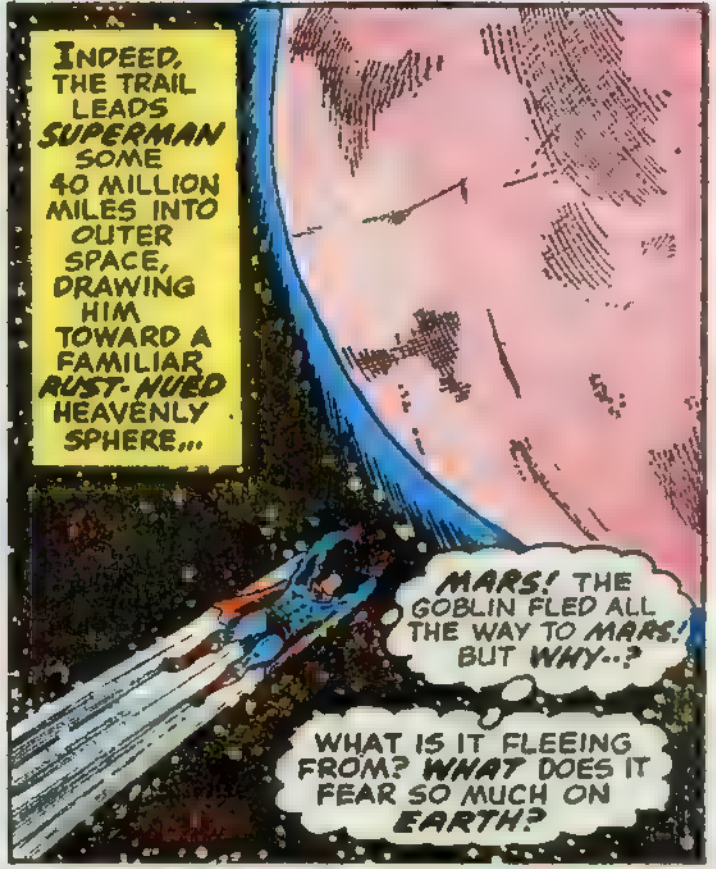
AH... THEORY CONFIRMED! MY **MICROSCOPIC VISION** REVEALS A STREAM OF TINY **SMOKE PARTICLES** IN THE AIR!

MY GUESS IS THE **GOBLIN RE-MATERIALIZED** AFTER I LEFT, THEN CONTINUED ON ITS WAY!



BUT SUPERNATURAL OR NOT, **BARTOX** FORGOT THERE'S A FILM OF **SMOKE** STILL CLINGING TO HIM... ENOUGH TO LEAVE A TELLTALE **TRAIL** OF PARTICLES FOR ME TO FOLLOW!

LOOKS LIKE MY QUARRY FLED CLEAR OUT OF THIS WORLD!



INDEED, THE TRAIL LEADS **SUPERMAN** SOME 40 MILLION MILES INTO OUTER SPACE, DRAWING HIM TOWARD A FAMILIAR **RUST-HUED** HEAVENLY SPHERE...

MARS! THE GOBLIN FLED ALL THE WAY TO **MARS!** BUT WHY...?

WHAT IS IT FLEEING FROM? WHAT DOES IT FEAR SO MUCH ON **EARTH?**



AND AFTER PLUNGING AHEAD INTO THE THIN **MARTIAN** ATMOSPHERE, AN EYE-STAGGERING SIGHT AWAITS...

GREAT SUNS! **BARTOX'S** TRAIL STRETCHES INTO THE CRATER OF **NIX OLYMPICA**—THE MOST **GIGANTIC** VOLCANO IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM! IT'S **THREE TIMES** THE SIZE OF **MT. EVEREST** ON **EARTH!** *

*EDITOR'S NOTE: **MARINER-9** HAS TRANSMITTED DATA REVEALING THE SUMMIT OF THIS STILL-ACTIVE VOLCANO TO BE A FULL **FIFTEEN MILES** HIGH!

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

Read this story if
you want to

"GET IT ALL TOGETHER"

when you get out
of the service

ONE DAY, A FEW MONTHS AFTER WE BOTH GOT
OUT OF THE SERVICE, I RAN INTO MY OLD BUDDY, PETE.

PETE! HOW YOU
MAKING OUT?

NOT TOO GOOD, JOE. I
CAN'T SEEM TO HACK IT...
NO JOB I CAN GET
PAYS ANY
MONEY.



LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE
DOING ALL RIGHT,
THOUGH.

I'LL SAY! I'M IN
ELECTRONICS AND
HAVE MY FCC LICENSE



ELECTRONICS!
HOW'D YOU WORK
THAT, JOE?

CIE, PETE! CIE
HELPED ME LEARN
ELECTRONICS ON MY
OFF DUTY HOURS--BY MAIL!
IT'S THE SCIENCE OF
THE SEVENTIES, MAN.



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DEEP WITHIN
THE SEETHING
BOWELS OF THE
MONSTROUS
CRATER VENTURES
THE **ACTION ACE**.
STILL SEARCHING...

NO TRACE
OF THE GOBLIN...
BUT THE SMOKE-
PARTICLES LEAD
HERE! GOT TO
KEEP LOOKING FOR
IT UNTIL--

LOOK NO LONGER,
SUPERMAN! YOU
FOUND MY SANCTUARY--
BUT YOU SHALL
NEVER **LEAVE IT!**

?!?
SNAGGED..!

DOWN-DOWN-DOWN PLUNGE
MAN AND MONSTER, SINKING
SWIFTLY THROUGH THE
MOLTEN MUCK...

WE'RE
FATED
TO CLASH
AGAIN!
BUT THIS
TIME
YOU
SHALL
BE THE
ONE WHO
DIES--
A
DEATH
FROM
WHICH
THERE
IS **NO**
RETURN!

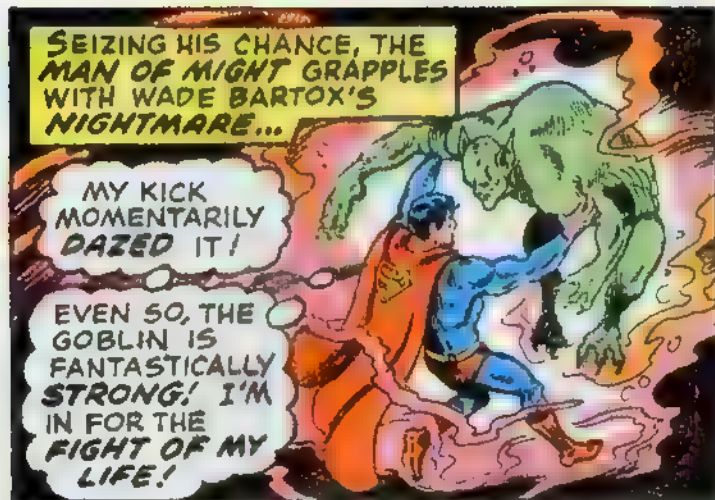
ENOUGH IS **ENOUGH!**
IT'S TIME I STRIKE
BACK AND PUT MY
FOOT DOWN!

UHHHHH...

SEIZING HIS CHANCE, THE MAN OF MIGHT GRAPPLES WITH WADE BARTOX'S NIGHTMARE...

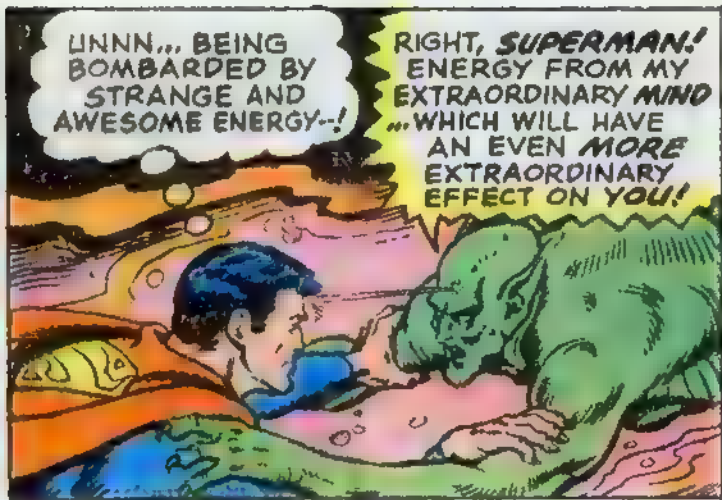
MY KICK MOMENTARILY DAZED IT!

EVEN SO, THE GOBLIN IS FANTASTICALLY STRONG! I'M IN FOR THE FIGHT OF MY LIFE!



UNNN... BEING BOMBARDED BY STRANGE AND AWESOME ENERGY--!

RIGHT, **SUPERMAN!** ENERGY FROM MY EXTRAORDINARY MIND ...WHICH WILL HAVE AN EVEN MORE EXTRAORDINARY EFFECT ON YOU!

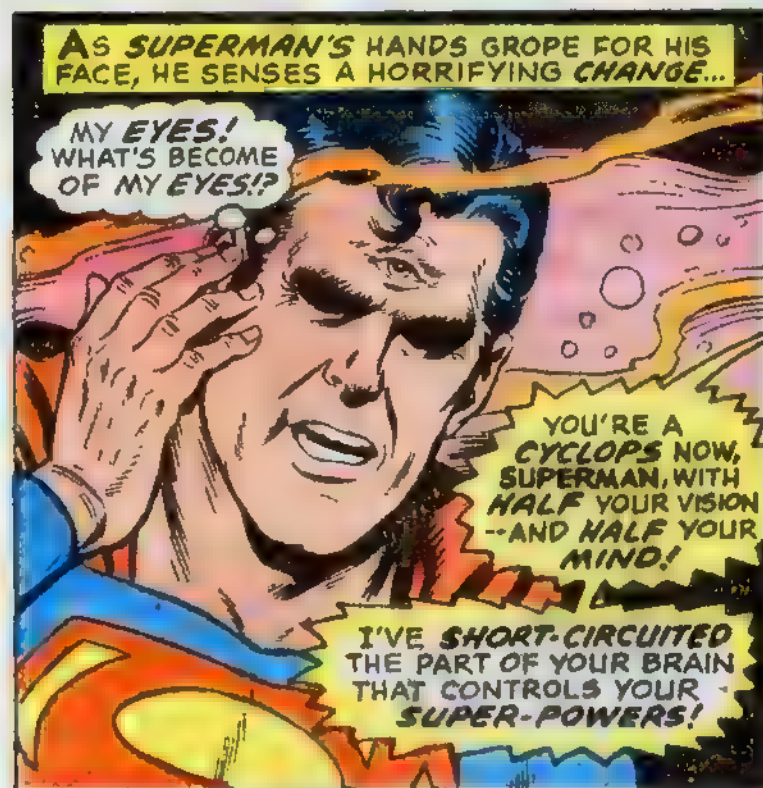


AS **SUPERMAN'S** HANDS GROPE FOR HIS FACE, HE SENSES A HORRIFYING CHANGE...

MY EYES! WHAT'S BECOME OF MY EYES!?

YOU'RE A **CYCLOPS** NOW, SUPERMAN, WITH HALF YOUR VISION --AND HALF YOUR MIND!

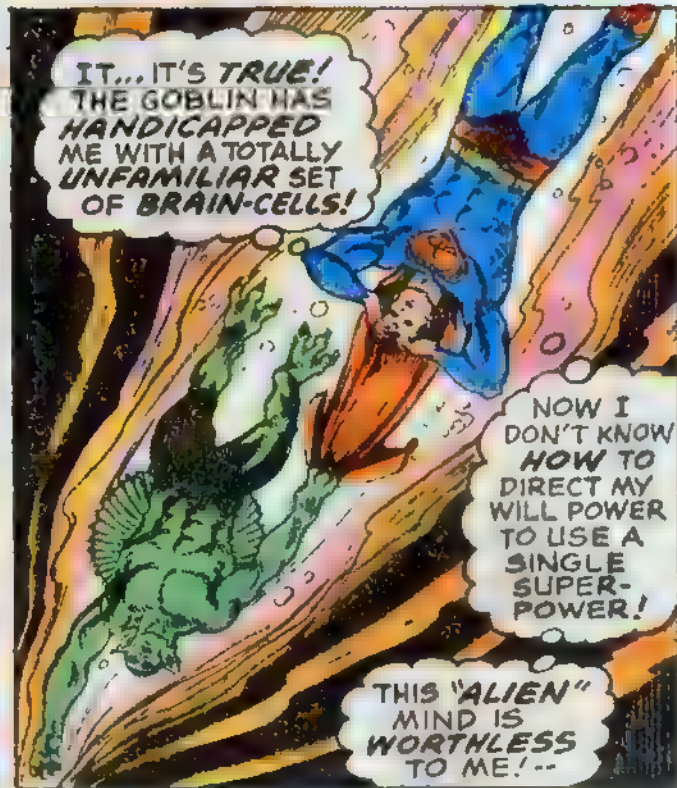
I'VE **SHORT-CIRCUITED** THE PART OF YOUR BRAIN THAT CONTROLS YOUR **SUPER-POWERS!**



IT... IT'S TRUE! THE GOBLIN HAS HANDICAPPED ME WITH A TOTALLY UNFAMILIAR SET OF BRAIN-CELLS!

NOW I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DIRECT MY WILL POWER TO USE A SINGLE SUPER-POWER!

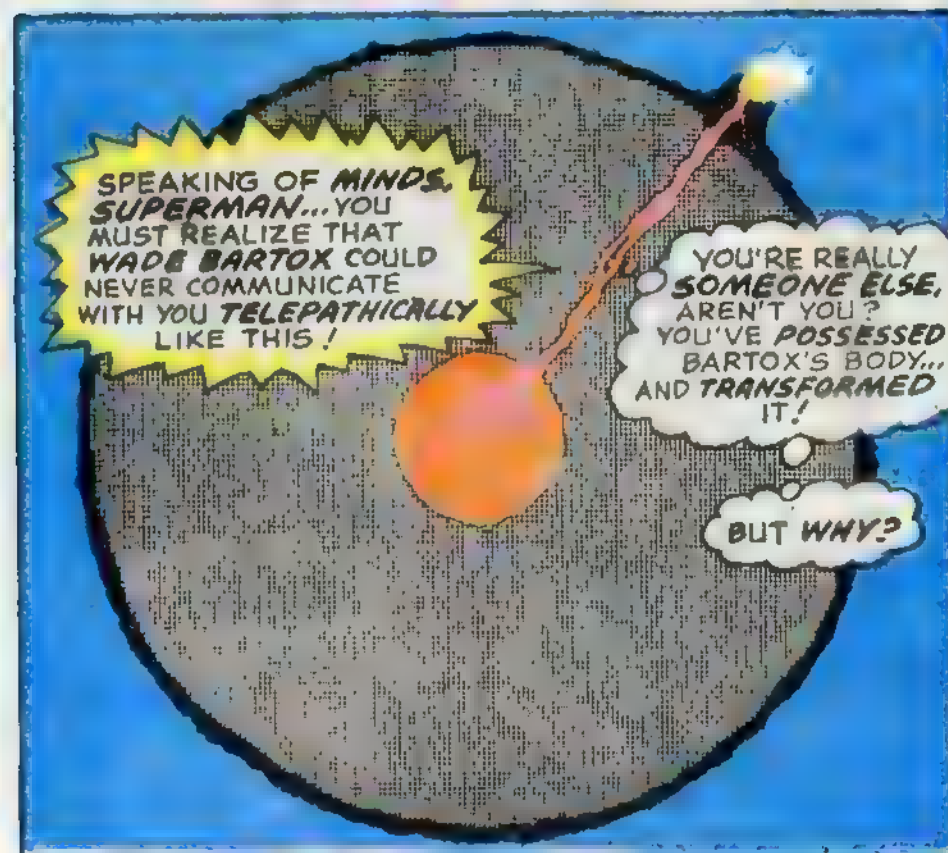
THIS "ALIEN" MIND IS WORTHLESS TO ME!--



SPEAKING OF MINDS, **SUPERMAN...** YOU MUST REALIZE THAT **WADE BARTOX** COULD NEVER COMMUNICATE WITH YOU **TELEPATHICALLY** LIKE THIS!

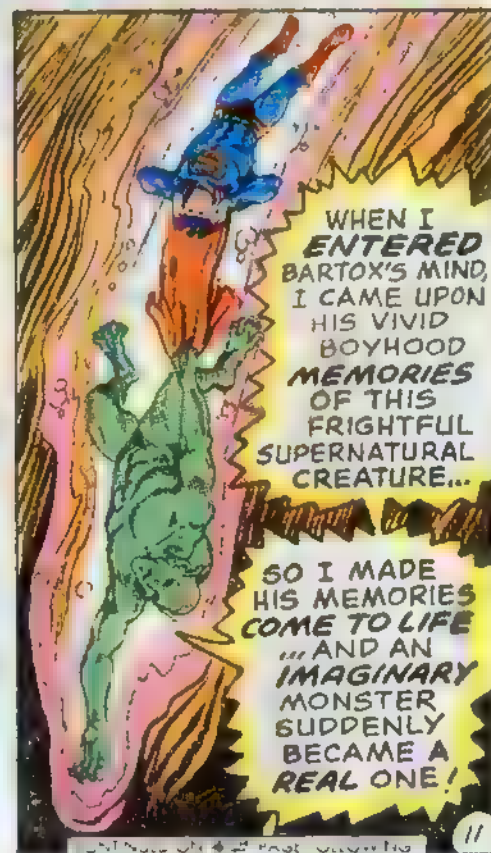
YOU'RE REALLY **SOMEONE ELSE**, AREN'T YOU? YOU'VE POSSESSED BARTOX'S BODY... AND TRANSFORMED IT!

BUT WHY?



WHEN I ENTERED BARTOX'S MIND, I CAME UPON HIS VIVID BOYHOOD MEMORIES OF THIS FRIGHTFUL SUPERNATURAL CREATURE...

SO I MADE HIS MEMORIES COME TO LIFE ...AND AN **IMAGINARY** MONSTER SUDDENLY BECAME A **REAL ONE!**





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- ☐ 45 FALLING IN LOVE
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- ☐ 62 OUR FIGHTING FORCES
- ☐ 63 STAR SPANGLED WAR
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- ☐ 64 WEIRD WAR TALES

ADVENTURE

- ☐ 75 TARZAN
- ☐ 76 KORAK
- ☐ 77 WEIRD WORLDS
- ☐ 78 KAMANDI
- ☐ 79 SWORD OF SORCERY

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UNKNOWN
- ☐ 81 STRANGE ADVENTURES

**THE NEW
MAGAZINE
OF WEIRD HUMOR!**

If you're sick
of the same
old glop . . .
run down to
your newsstand
and buy **PLOP!**

THIS ISSUE ON SALE JUNE 21ST

DC

PLOP!

"Arms" Armstrong

PLOP reports that he was
that his arms were expanding his
legs. I do control his way that I
enough that make his arms pain, so
my studio. He added.



When I dropped by the DC offices this afternoon, there was so much going on that I couldn't even find my desk! It's only February, but we're getting our summer line of comics ready and those are the ones that we take extra-special care with. To add to that, there's a move in the air. Around the time that you'll be reading this, DC is moving cross-town to a beautiful new office, and the whole office is literally crawling with architects and their blueprints and plans. And as those aforesaid blueprints have a lot to do with one of my favorite projects, ye old Inquiring Fanatic is going to go *Behind The Scenes* once more, to give you the latest news on. . .

THE DC APPRENTICE PROGRAM

What do blueprints have to do with our new apprenticeship program? Why, it's simple, my friends. I was taking a look at the plans for the office that the bullpeners are going to use.

As you may remember, at this year's *July Comic Art Convention*, here in New York City from July 4th to 8th, the various editors of DC Comics will be inspecting portfolios of young people who want to become writers and artists for the comics industry (for more details, see *Behind The Scenes* #1-or write: Comicon, NPP, 909 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022). Those people who are selected will be employed as apprentices, and given the opportunity to study their crafts here in the office. Sol Harrison, the production manager and creator of the Apprentice Program, has already brought in two new people to the business this way—Allen Milgrom and Carl Gafford. Some good scripts have been submitted that are being worked on. Be sure to give your talent a chance.

Anyway, back to the blueprints. It's a studio office, all set up to help the apprentices serve as assistants to our top artists and writers. The new offices also are going to give our regular people more room to work in, so don't be surprised if they enjoy their new spacious rooms so much that they come up with a lot of new books and features.

For instance, Denny O'Neil has decided to revitalize *WEIRD WORLDS!* There's going to be a big surprise coming your way in the December issue, but it's a little too early to tell you about it. So I'll just tell you that there's a sneak preview of the new feature coming your way in the October issue, and I'll give you some background information on our hottest new strip in my next column. Denny's breathlessly waiting for his new office, and you can count on even more surprises from him when he gets there!

Practically every editor has a new project in mind. Some are new books that I've already told you about (like Julie Schwartz's *Strange Sports Stories*) and others are new titles that are still top secret (I can't wait to tell you about them, but I've got to hold off a little while.) and still others are new formats or ideas for long established mags.

Legion Of Super-Heroes fans will be glad to hear

that Superboy's magazine is now "Superboy And The Legion Of Super-Heroes" in response to the great job that Cary Bates and Dave Cockrum have been doing on the strip and the fantastic fan mail that they get.



Joe Simon's still hard at work creating new ideas. His latest blockbuster is *Champion Sports Stories*, a companion mag to *Strange Sports Stories*. This mag's different though, its emphasis is on ordinary sports reporting, not the fantasy stories in *Strange Sports*. It'll be coming your way on July 26th. His classic mystery stories from the golden age of comics (done with the one and only Jack Kirby) are also going to be coming your way—in a new mag called *Black Magic*.

Of course, there's a lot happening with our other mags too. I noticed a lot of new things on our editors' desks, and I'd like to pass some of them on to you. So let's look at the latest. . .

HAPPENINGS

Comic book fans always look forward to the annual *Justice League-Justice Society* team-up in the summer issues of JLA. Last year, the *Seven Soldiers Of Victory* guest-starred. This year, editor Julie Schwartz and writer Len Wein have conspired to return the greatest heroes of the *Quality* comics line to action. They're your old favorites—heroes like *The Ray*, *The Black Condor*, *Doll Man*, *Uncle Sam*, *The Human Bomb* and *The Phantom Lady*. And they're all busy with a "Crisis On Earth-X". Watch for the first part of this story, on sale now.

Golden Age fans will want to get copies of *Secret Origins* #5 (out in August) reserved at your newsstand months in advance! Nelson Bridwell has decided to reprint the two-part origin of *The Spectre* in that issue, from the dawn of DC Comics. The issues of *More Fun Comics* that those stories appeared in now sell to collectors for over \$200! That's a pretty good buy for 20c!

The Phantom Stranger gets a new look soon, courtesy of a new writer who is an old pro—Arnold Drake, the man who created *The Doom Patrol*. And *The Spawn Of Frankenstein* is being taken over by one of our top weird writers (in more than one sense of the word), Steve Skeates.

On the personal side of things, Sol Harrison's been making mysterious trips to a small town in Illinois recently. Get ready for the inside story on Metropolis in my next *Behind The Scenes* column.

Back to the July Convention for a moment. I thought you'd like to know that besides the future of DC, our past and present will be well represented. Bob Kane, the artist who helped create *The Batman* in the forties will be a guest of honor (our past lives!) and C.C. Beck, the artist behind *Shazam!* will be there representing our present. Not to mention the dozens of other DC people who'll be attending.

There's much, much more happening here, so stick with us. It's going to be a long summer, and we've got a lot of things coming just for you!

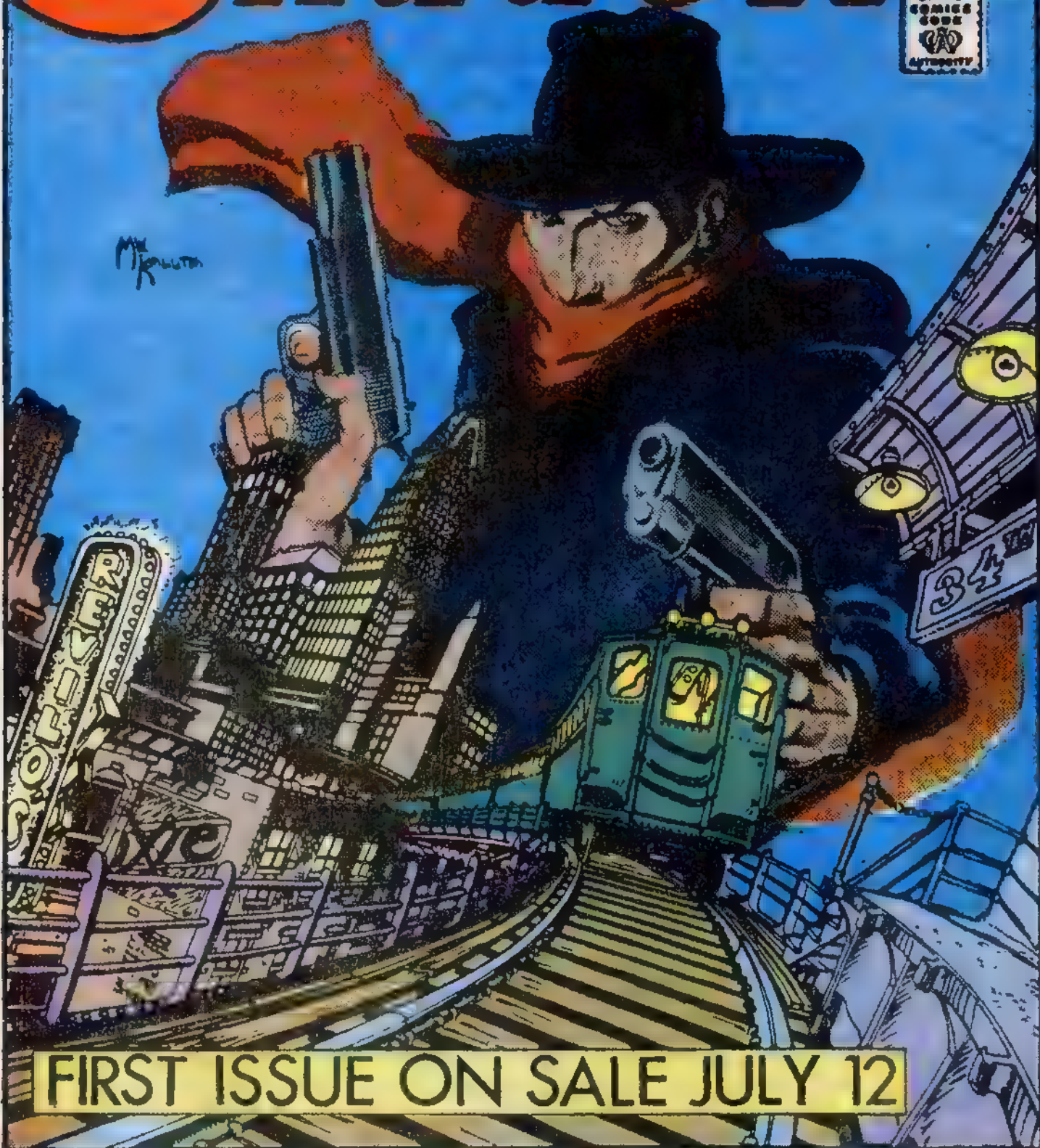


THE SHADOW

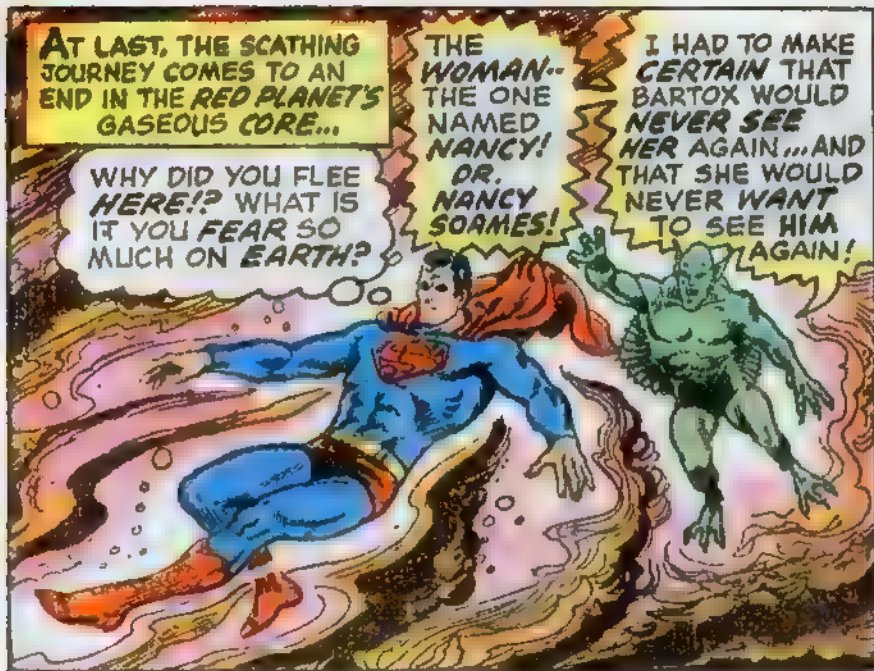
WHO KNOWS WHAT EVIL LURKS
IN THE HEARTS OF MEN?



THE Shadow



FIRST ISSUE ON SALE JULY 12

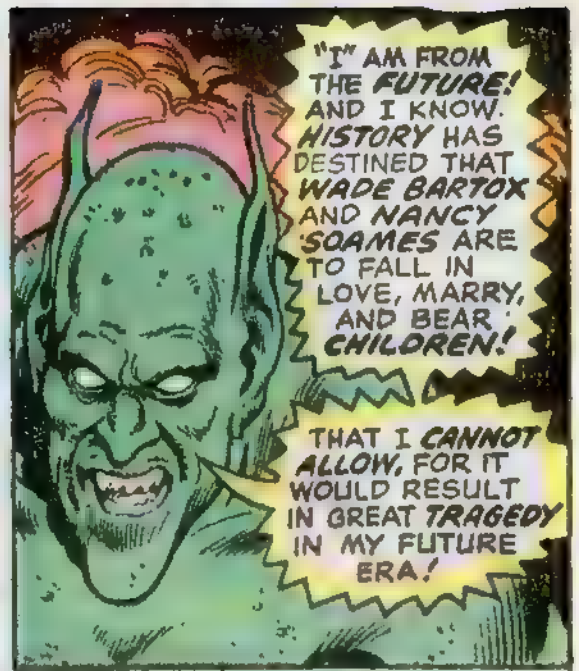


AT LAST, THE SCATHING JOURNEY COMES TO AN END IN THE RED PLANET'S GASEOUS CORE...

WHY DID YOU FLEE HERE!? WHAT IS IT YOU FEAR SO MUCH ON EARTH?

THE WOMAN-- THE ONE NAMED NANCY! DR. NANCY SOAMES!

I HAD TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT BARTOX WOULD NEVER SEE HER AGAIN... AND THAT SHE WOULD NEVER WANT TO SEE HIM AGAIN!



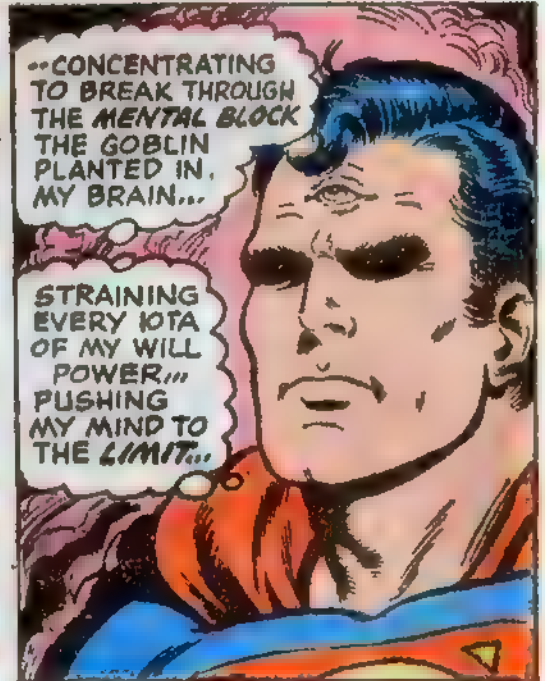
"I" AM FROM THE FUTURE! AND I KNOW. HISTORY HAS DESTINED THAT WADE BARTOX AND NANCY SOAMES ARE TO FALL IN LOVE, MARRY, AND BEAR CHILDREN!

THAT I CANNOT ALLOW, FOR IT WOULD RESULT IN GREAT TRAGEDY IN MY FUTURE ERA!



NO TIME TO TELL YOU ANY MORE... BUT AT LEAST NOW YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I HAD TO SEPARATE WADE AND NANCY... WHY YOU MUST NOT UNDO WHAT I'VE DONE!

IT'S BEEN SO BUSY JUSTIFYING ...ITSELF... IT'S NOT AWARE I'VE BEEN CONCENTRATING--



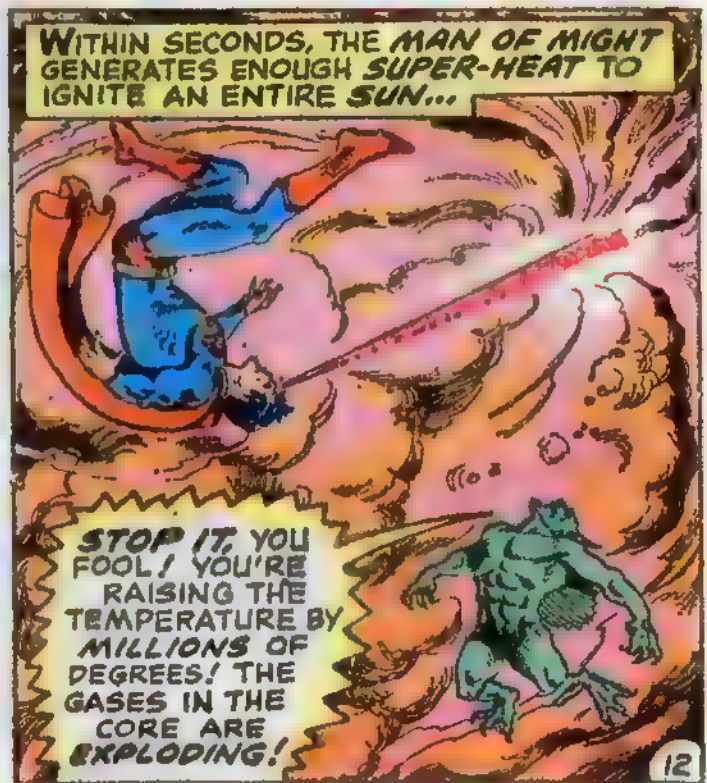
--CONCENTRATING TO BREAK THROUGH THE MENTAL BLOCK THE GOBLIN PLANTED IN MY BRAIN...

STRAINING EVERY iota OF MY WILL POWER... PUSHING MY MIND TO THE LIMIT...



UNTIL, FINALLY...

I DID IT! I ACTIVATED MY HEAT VISION AT FULL POWER!



WITHIN SECONDS, THE MAN OF MIGHT GENERATES ENOUGH SUPER-HEAT TO IGNITE AN ENTIRE SUN...

STOP IT, YOU FOOL! YOU'RE RAISING THE TEMPERATURE BY MILLIONS OF DEGREES! THE GASES IN THE CORE ARE EXPLODING!

CATAPULTED UPWARD BY THE UNIMAGINABLE PRESSURE THAT FINALLY LETS LOOSE-- THE TWO ANTAGONISTS ARE TUMBLED TOWARD THE SURFACE ATOP A SURGING GUSH OF MOLTEN MAGMA...

UP THROUGH THE MARTIAN CRUST-- UP THROUGH THE MONSTROUS PEAK OF NIX OLYMPICA THEY'RE THRUST...

MY PLAN WORKED! SINCE MARS' CORE WAS ON A DIRECT PIPELINE WITH NIX OLYMPICA... I FIGURED AN EXPLOSION WOULD PUSH US TO THE SURFACE!

NOW FOR MY FOE!

SUPERMAN'S MADE US HELPLESS "PASSENGERS" OF A VOLCANIC ERUPTION!

BUT ASTONISHINGLY, AS SUPERMAN IS ABOUT TO ATTACK...

ALL OF A SUDDEN... MY EYES... AND BARTOX... ARE BACK TO NORMAL!

THAT "MENTAL MENACE" MUST'VE FLED! PERHAPS BACK TO THE FUTURE...?

QUICKLY, THE METROPOLIS MARVEL WRAPS THE DAZED EARTHMAN IN HIS INDESTRUCTIBLE CAPE FOR PROTECTION-- AND FOR THE SUPER-SPEED TRIP BACK TO EARTH...

LOOKS LIKE BARTOX WILL BE OKAY AFTER A FEW DAYS' REST!

BUT I'LL STILL BE WONDERING... WHO WAS THAT MIND-INVADER FROM THE FUTURE?

WHAT TRAGEDY WILL TAKE PLACE IF WADE BARTOX AND NANCY SOAMES DO MARRY SOMEDAY?

NO WAY I'LL EVER KNOW!

EPILOGUE

2002 2045 2089

ONCE AGAIN, THE INVISIBLE BRAIN-BEAM SPANS THE GULFS OF SPACE-AND-TIME ON A RETURN JOURNEY TO THE 21ST CENTURY...

I HAD TO HURRIEDLY EXIT BARTOX'S BODY... FOR THE CRUCIAL MOMENT HAS ARRIVED!

MUST MERGE BACK WITH MY PHYSICAL COUNTERPART IN MY OWN TIME!

LOOK-- HERE HE COMES!

WAS MY MISSION SUCCESSFUL? DID I CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY ENOUGH TO PREVENT THE MARRIAGE OF MY 20TH CENTURY ANCESTORS?

OR DID SUPERMAN'S EFFORTS TO THWART ME FINALLY REUNITE THEM?

THIS IS THE BIG MOMENT! THE OVERLORD'S ABOUT TO PASS BY!

DID NANCY SOAMES EVER BECOME THE WIFE OF WADE BARTOX?

OR DID SHE SHUT THAT "MONSTER" OUT OF HER LIFE FROM THAT DAY FORWARD? WHICH PATH DID DESTINY FOLLOW?

A SPLIT-SECOND LATER, JUST AS THE BRAINWASHED ASSASSIN IS ON THE VERGE OF RELEASING HIS DEADLY PSYCHA-BOLT...

EEKKKK! LOOK--THE MAN NEXT TO ME... FADING AWAY!

I'M CEASING TO EXIST! I DID IT-- MY ANCESTORS NEVER MARRIED-- WHICH MEANS THEY HAVE NO DESCENDANTS!

THEREFORE-- IT'S AS IF I NEVER LIVED!

How far better that I perish... than a courageous and gallant man like the Overlord of Titan!

THIS HAS BEEN THE STORY OF A MAN WHO NEVER LIVED... YET WHO "DIED" AN UNKNOWN HERO!

Medieval

YOU RECEIVE A COMPLETE GAME:

- 80 MEDIEVAL FIGHTING MEN in all battle positions, fully equipped with all the weapons and protection of the age in beautiful gold, black and silver.
- 2 ARMORED BARONS ON HORSES
- 2 CATAPULTS — actually hurl ammunition to breach Castle walls
- 10 BOULDERS for catapults
- 2 GOAT HEAD RAMS — a truly used to force the Castle gates.
- 2 DOUBLE DOOR CASTLE GATES — that actually open and close
- 2 DRAW BRIDGES — that actually raise and lower.
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- 1 ARROW SPINNER

A FULL LARGE BATTLEFIELD A castle so realistic it can hold 121 men on its siege decks. Deep in the Castle's center and, among its many chambers lies the comfort of the Throne Room—a stark contrast to the wounded heaped upon the grounds, outside these walls.

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1.69
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- BATTLE CALCULATOR • SIMPLE DIRECTIONS FOR SUPREME COMMAND OF FAST STRATEGIC ACTION ON 3 FRONTS!

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OR WE'LL BE WIPED OUT BY JETS, THE ENEMY PENETRATED OUR MISSILE RING WITH LAND AND SEA RAIDS WE NEED YOU NOW TO LEAD A COUNTERATTACK WITH COMBINED FORCES AND FIGHTER-BOMBERS WERE DOOMED UNLESS YOU SIGN THIS ORDER NOW!!

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Results in just 30 days
Pocket gym: slaps inches of muscle on your arms and torso. Gain the respect of your friends. The admiration of the girls. Keep fit and healthy. Fear no one. Made of heavy rubber.

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Are you willing to take a chance? We won't tell you what you get but because you're willing to gamble, we'll give you more than your money's worth.

No. 670



MAGIC CARDS

Deck is marked and striped. Can be read from the back but looks like ordinary deck. With instructions for 10 terrific tricks.

No. 190

OVER 1000 FREE GIFTS YOURS FOR THE ASKING
This miracle book gives the addresses of associations, federal agencies and manufacturers that are anxious to send you **ABSOLUTELY FREE** samples, manuals, and books. A fabulous treasure trove completely up-to-date which will bring you gifts worth many times its low cost.

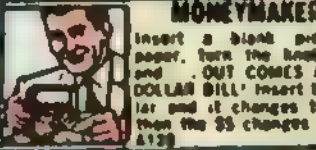
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SKIN HEAD WIG

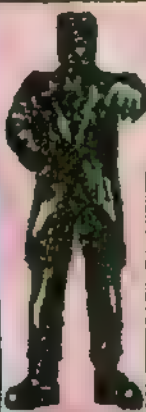
Most people try to grow hair. This is just the opposite. Made of flesh toned latex to fit all heads. Really changes your appearance.

No. A35



MONEYMAKER

Insert a blank piece of paper, turn the knob and... **OUT COMES A REAL DOLLAR BILL!** Insert the dollar and it changes to a \$5 then the \$5 changes to \$10 \$100



7 FOOT MONSTER

Bigger than life—Frankenstein, the man made monster. Giant 7 foot tall, his eyes glow eerily in authentic color on durable paper-thin, so scary as your wildest nightmares.

No. 885

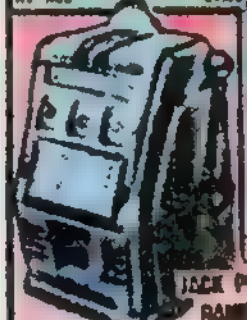
MONSTER-SIZE SKELETON

No. 1200

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FREE NERVE CENTER CHART
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• JUDO throws, JIU JITSU Holds
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RD 73



JACK POT BANK

Over-operators use armed bandit! Works like slots in Las Vegas. Deposit coins, pull handle and reels spin like the real thing. Dimes are removable. Should not be used for gambling.

No. 2020



SECRET BOOK SAFE

Looks like any book to camouflage your valuables. Securely locked with your own private combination. Tough under-structure is covered with simulated leather binding.

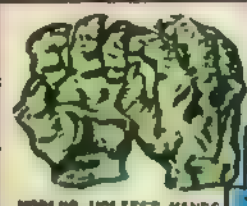
No. 700



WEREWOLF HORROR MASK

This rubber mask is so grotesque that it is sure to shake up the whole neighborhood. Be the "Werewolf" that prowls again!

No. 26W...



MONSIEUR MOLEST HANDS

Slip these knobby "paws" on and watch your friends disappear. Ugh! They're awful! If you've got the courage, maybe you can have fun(?) with them.

Item No. 607...



Secret Spy Scope

PEN SIZE—CLIPS ON YOUR POCKET & POWER IDENTIFIED. Six power wide field magnifier is great for watching sporting events, nature study, etc. watching and counter spying. Also contains a 30 power microscope. Not a toy but a real optical instrument.

No. 730



RAQUEL WELCH PILLOW

Only \$1.98 what man couldn't enjoy. Sporting a night with Raquel Welch? Well, up can't deliver her but we can deliver that next best thing—a 12" x 24" ultra soft pillow of Raquel Welch's rugged magnet to serve as your headrest. Keep her for yourself or show her to your friends. Looks so sexy when everyone's asleep and feels this great gas item.

RAIS....



ONION GUM

Looks like real chewing gum but tastes like ONIONS! It's too funny! 5 slices to a pack.

No. 201



MINIATURE SECRET CAMERA

Precision camera so small, it fits in cigarette pack. Weighs 2 1/2 ounces and takes 10 pictures per roll. Precision ground lens and time expose shutter. Can be hidden anywhere. Complete with free roll of film.

No. 788



JOY BUZZER

Windup novelty you wear like a ring. Your victim gets a "SHOCKING" hand shake. Absolutely harmless.

No. 230



SEE BEHIND GLASSES

A specially treated pair of sunglasses with secret mirrors that enable you to see behind you without anyone knowing that you're watching.

No. 8063



Weighted Wristlets

"Power Packed" Arm Builders To Give you mighty striking power
"Power Packed" wristlets build the muscular arms you want without special equipment or exercises. Just wear these rugged lead weighted wristlets during your ordinary activities at work or play.

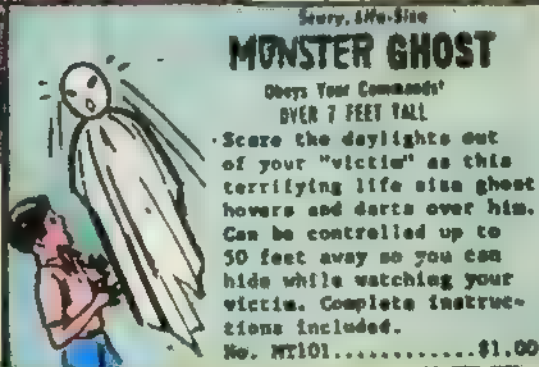
#900...



TRICK BASEBALL

It bounces, it catches, it curves, it dips. It's impossible to catch. It's sure to get all the kids on the block spinning after it. There's a barrel of fun in every bounce of this amazing baseball.

No. 138



MONSTER GHOST

Obeys Your Commands! OVER 7 FEET TALL
Scare the daylight out of your "victim" as this terrifying life size ghost hovers and darts over him. Can be controlled up to 50 feet away so you can hide while watching your victim. Complete instructions included.

No. NT101



THROW YOUR VOICE

Throw your voice into trunks, behind doors, everywhere. Fits in your mouth out of sight. Fool teacher, friends, family. Free book on "How to Become a Ventriquist"

No. 137



XRAY SPECS

Scientific optical principle really works. With X-ray Specs you seem to be able to look through flesh and see the bones underneath. Look at your friend. Is that really his body you "see" under his clothes?

No. PL2

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We cannot accept orders totaling less than \$1.00.

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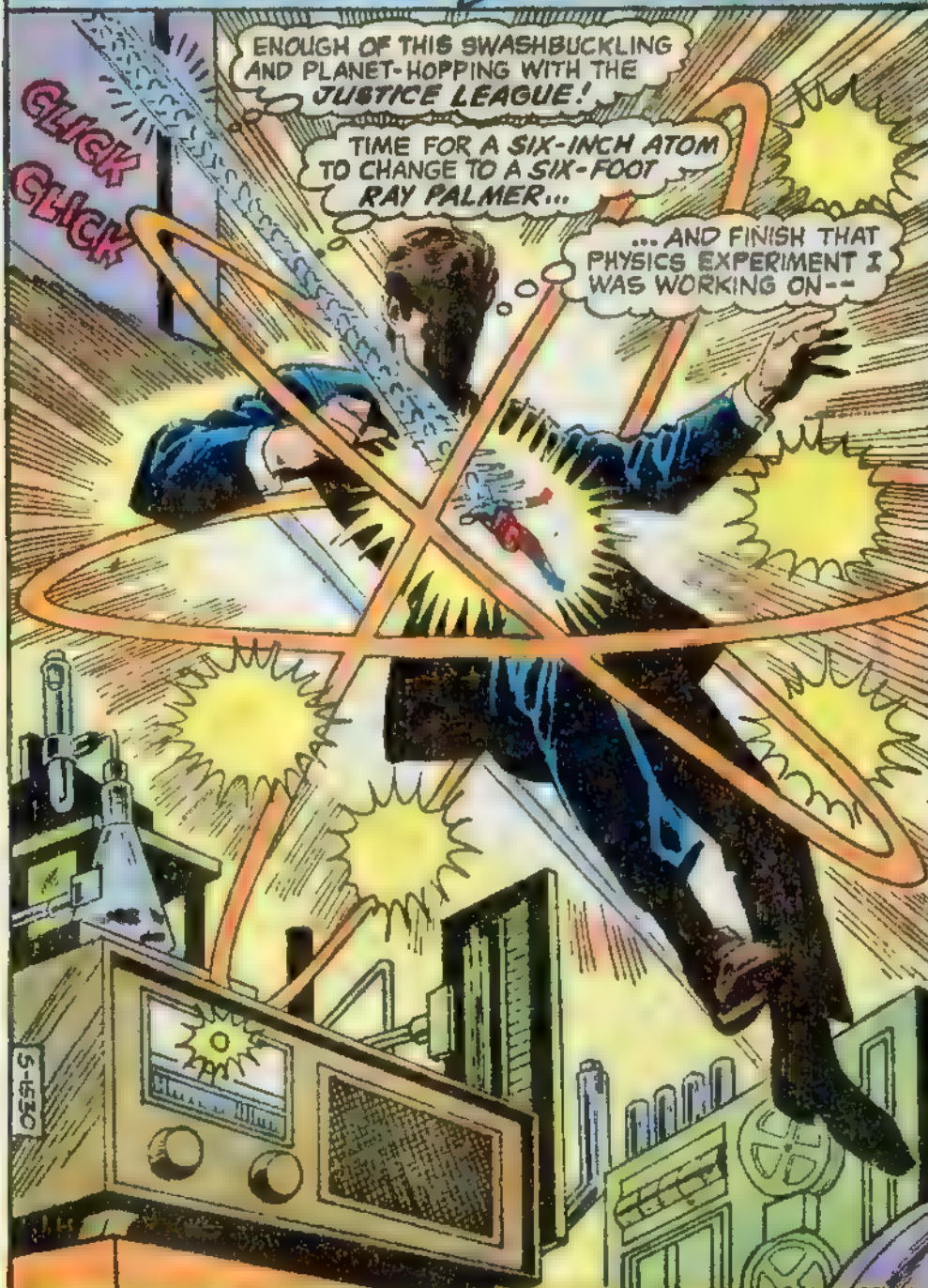
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For COD orders please send 50c good will deposit. Pay balance on delivery plus COD and handling charges.
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ADDRESS _____
New York State residents add appropriate sales tax.

The **ATOM**

UNLIKE OTHER COSTUMED HEROES, **THE ATOM** DOES NOT PARTICULARLY ENJOY PLAYING CRIME-STOPPING GAMES WITH EVERY COSTUMED VILLAIN WHO HAPPENS ALONG.

SO HE CAN ONLY GRUMBLE WITH RESIGNATION WHEN HIS OLD-TIME FOE, **CHRONOS**, BREAKS OUT OF JAIL AND PROCLAIMS THAT...

"**THE TIME THIEF STRIKES BUT ONCE!**"



STORY BY:
ELLIOT MAGGIN

ART BY:
DICK DILLIN & DICK GIORDANO

EDITED BY:
JULIUS SCHWARTZ

WHA--
THAT
RADIO
I
LEFT
ON...

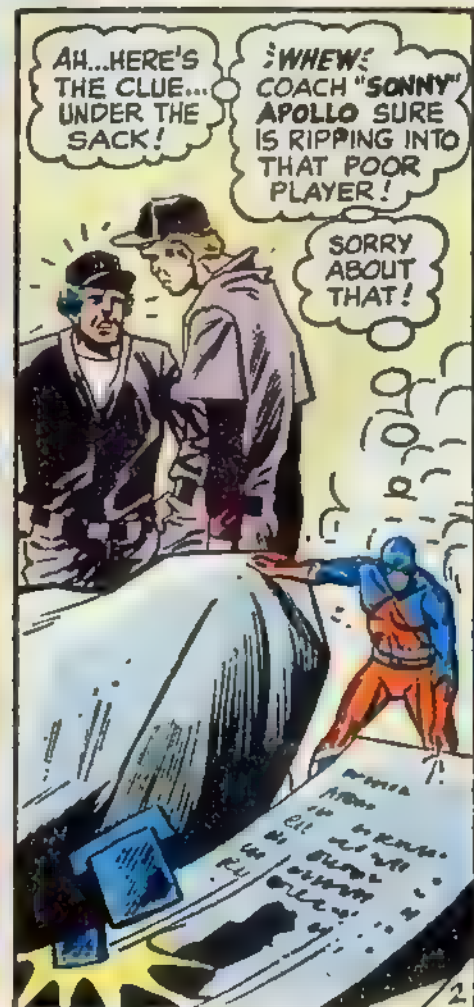
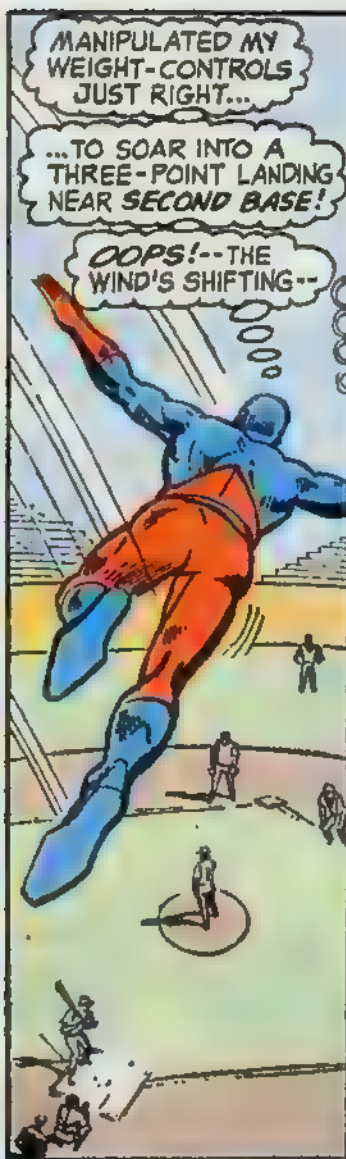
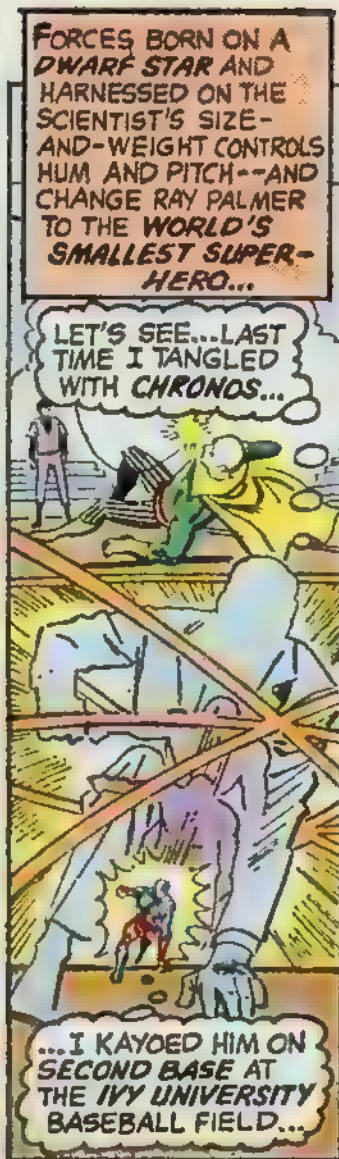
A REPEAT OF OUR
BULLETIN: **DAVID
CLINTON--** ALSO
KNOWN AS **CHRONOS**,
THE TIME THIEF--
WHO ESCAPED
PRISON TWO MONTHS
AGO, HAS HURLED
A CHALLENGE AT
THE ATOM...



THERE'S SOMETHING **SICK**
ABOUT THESE CHARACTERS
WHO BREAK OUT OF JAIL
JUST TO CHALLENGE A
SUPER-HERO!

CHRONOS HAS
ANNOUNCED THAT A
CLUE TO **WHERE** AND
WHEN HE WILL STRIKE
HAS BEEN HIDDEN AT
THE SITE OF HIS LAST
ENCOUNTER WITH
THE ATOM!





AS THE MIGHTY MIKE CATCHES THE WIND IN THE NOTE HE HAS RETRIEVED...

I'LL MANEUVER OVER TO THE OUTFIELD FENCE...

...AND SEE WHAT UNFOLDS NEXT!

THEN, READING THE NOTE ...

SUNDAY 2/5

ATOM--

I WILL STRIKE BUT
ONCE--AT ONE MAN!
TWO CLUES IN THIS
MESSAGE POINT TO
WHOM AND WHEN!
HAVE A NICE TIME
FIGURING THIS OUT!

--CHRONOS

I DO MY BEST
FIGURING IN THE
LAB...

THAT FLY BALL IS
MY TICKET OUT OF
HERE!

A LEAP
UPWARD--

--A "HIT"--

--AND THE "HOME
RUN" SENDS ME
FLYING HOMEWARD!

BACK
AT HIS
LAB...

AND THE LAST THING I WANT TO DO,
JEANIE, IS MISS SONNY APOLLO'S
BANQUET TONIGHT, CELEBRATING HIS
SILVER ANNIVERSARY AS ATHLETIC
DIRECTOR OF IVY UNIVERSITY!

BUT SOMETHING URGENT
HAS COME UP THAT
REQUIRES MY IMMEDIATE
ATTENTION...

I'LL TRY
TO GET
THERE
BEFORE
IT'S
OVER...

YOU
BETTER!

AFTER HOURS OF FUTILELY ATTEMPTING TO DECIPHER CHRONOS' CLUES...

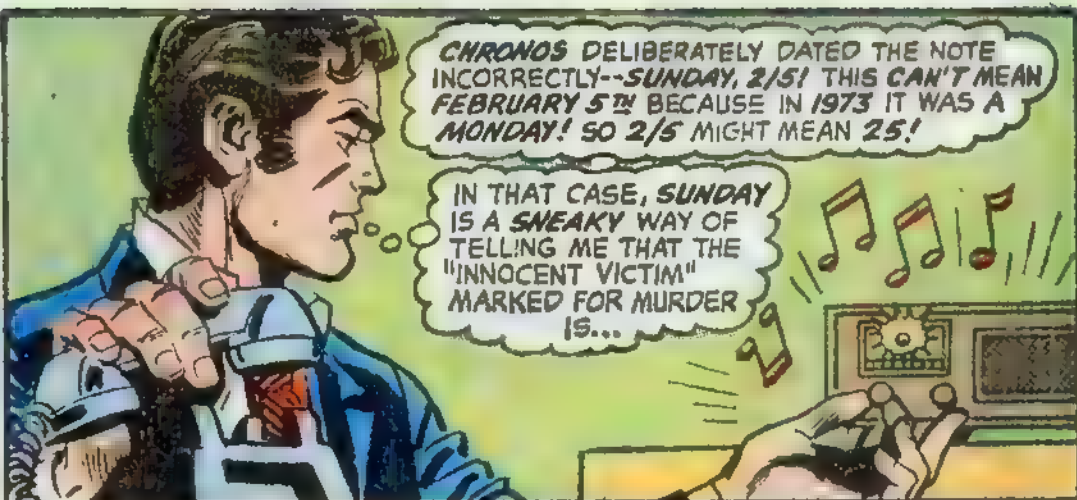
I'VE READ THIS NOTE FORWARD... BACKWARD... UPWARD... DOWNWARD... INSIDE-OUT... AND STILL CAN'T SEE ANY CLUE --

WAIT! THE DATE... THAT'S IT! SO OBVIOUS -- I OVERLOOKED IT!



CHRONOS DELIBERATELY DATED THE NOTE INCORRECTLY--SUNDAY, 2/5! THIS CAN'T MEAN FEBRUARY 5TH BECAUSE IN 1973 IT WAS A MONDAY! SO 2/5 MIGHT MEAN 25!

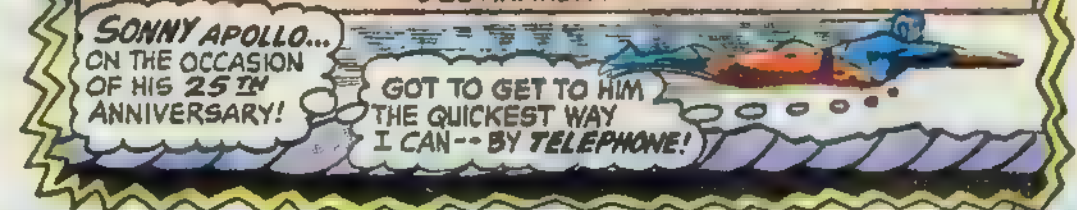
IN THAT CASE, SUNDAY IS A SNEAKY WAY OF TELLING ME THAT THE "INNOCENT VICTIM" MARKED FOR MURDER IS...



BY MAKING HIMSELF MICROSCOPICALLY SMALL, THE ATOM CAN RIDE THE ELECTRIC IMPULSES THROUGH THE TELEPHONE WIRES TO THE PHONE ON THE OTHER END OF THE "CALL"! HE IS PUSHED ALONG BY THE VIBRATIONS OF THE DIAPHRAGM PART OF THE TRANSMITTER, WHICH IS SET IN OPERATION BY SOUND-WAVES FROM THE RADIO. IN THIS UNIQUE MANNER, HE CAN TRAVEL AT TELEPHONIC SPEED TO HIS DESTINATION!

SONNY APOLLO... ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 25TH ANNIVERSARY!

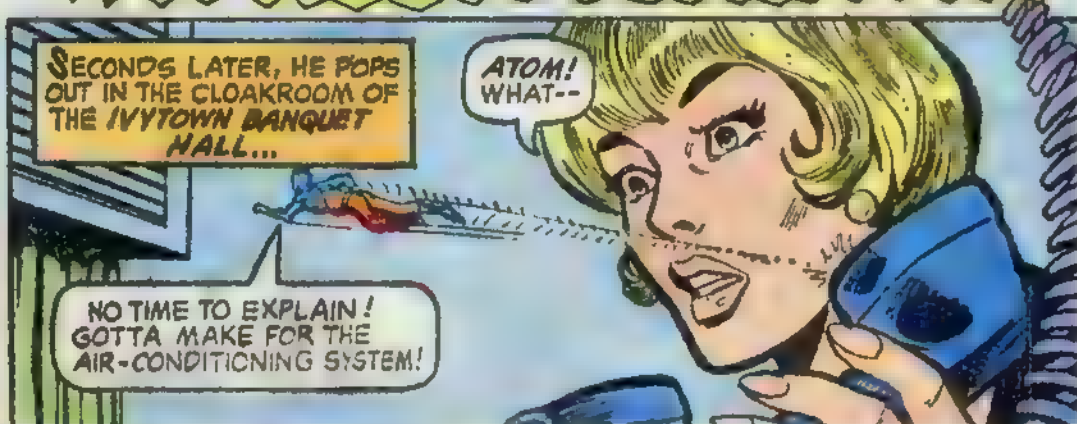
GOT TO GET TO HIM THE QUICKEST WAY I CAN-- BY TELEPHONE!



SECONDS LATER, HE POPS OUT IN THE CLOAKROOM OF THE IVYTOWN BANQUET HALL...

ATOM! WHAT--

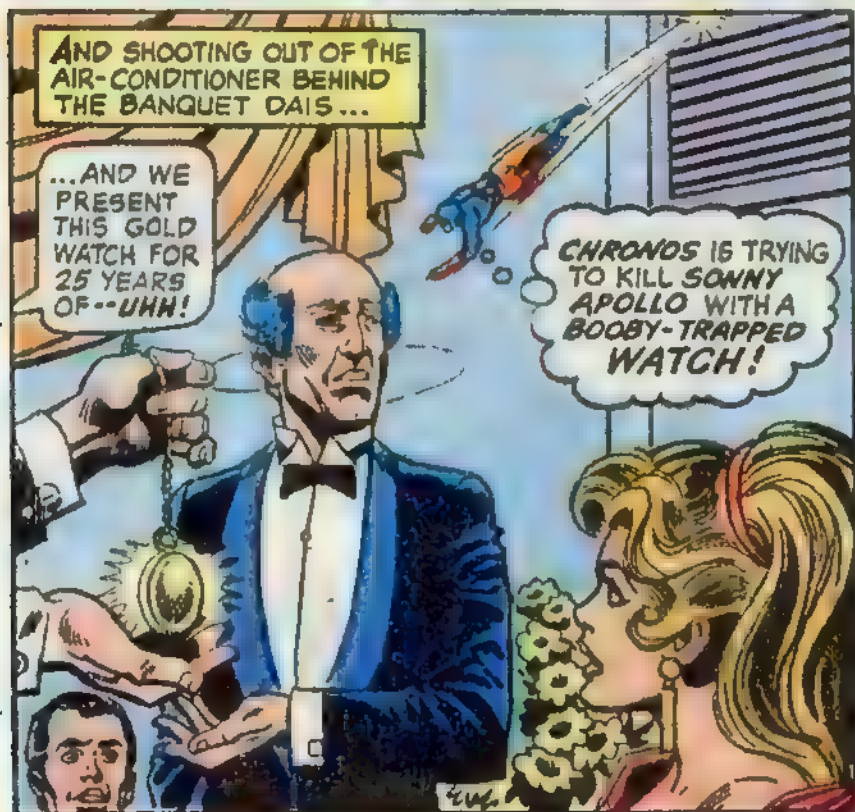
NO TIME TO EXPLAIN! GOTTA MAKE FOR THE AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM!



AND SHOOTING OUT OF THE AIR-CONDITIONER BEHIND THE BANQUET Dais...

...AND WE PRESENT THIS GOLD WATCH FOR 25 YEARS OF--UHH!

CHRONOS IS TRYING TO KILL SONNY APOLLO WITH A BOOBY-TRAPPED WATCH!



THE NEXT INSTANT, THE FORCE OF THE EXPLODING WATCH LIFTS THE MIGHTY MITE TOWARD...

... THE HIGH WINDOW! FROM WHAT I KNOW OF CHRONOS' "M.O." I'LL FIND HIM--

BLAMMM

--UP ON THE ROOF!

CHRONOS!

YOU DIDN'T EXPECT FATHER TIME, DID YOU--?

I'VE BEEN BIDDING MY TIME HERE WAITING FOR YOU--

--AS HAS THIS LETHAL PENDULUM ON MY MINIATURE GRANDFATHER CLOCK!

GLICK

GLICK

ALL IT TAKES IS A *SHIFT* IN MY WEIGHT TO LAND ON TOP OF THE PENDULUM...

...AND RIDE IT...

...LIKE A LUMBERJACK RIDING A LOG DOWN-RIVER!

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

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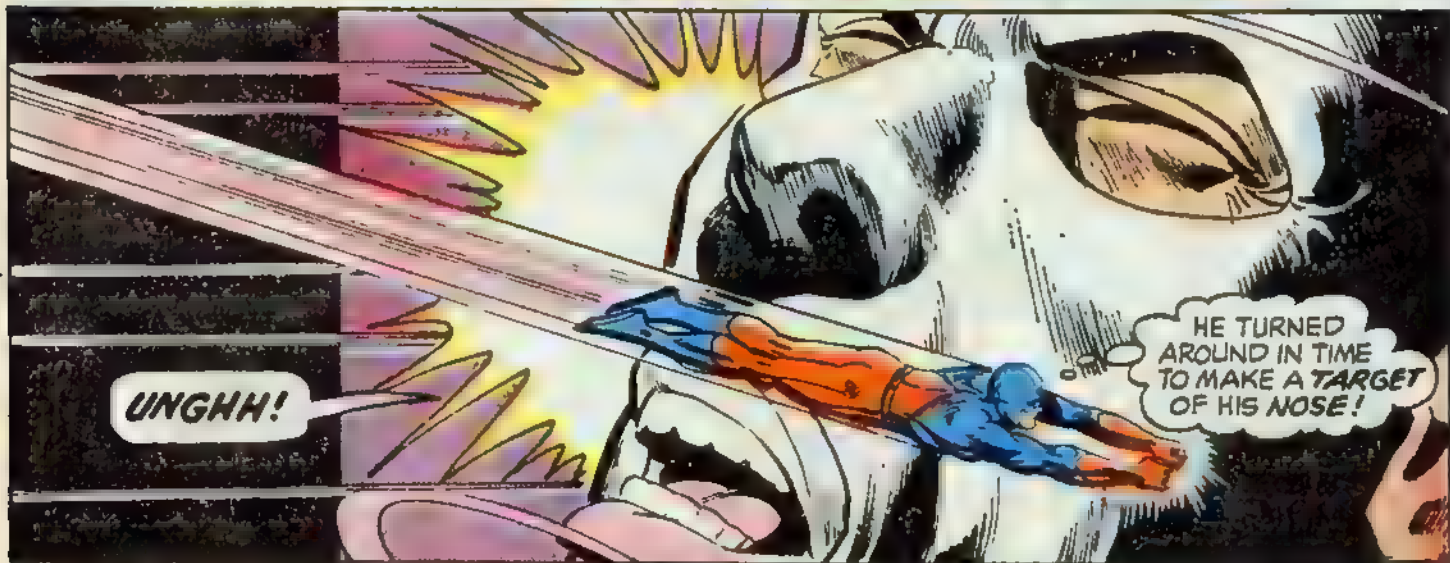
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THEN, BY
MANEUVERING
THE SPIN OF
THE PENDULUM,
THE ATOM
SWINGS
AROUND IN
PURSUIT OF
THE
FLYING
SUNDIAL...

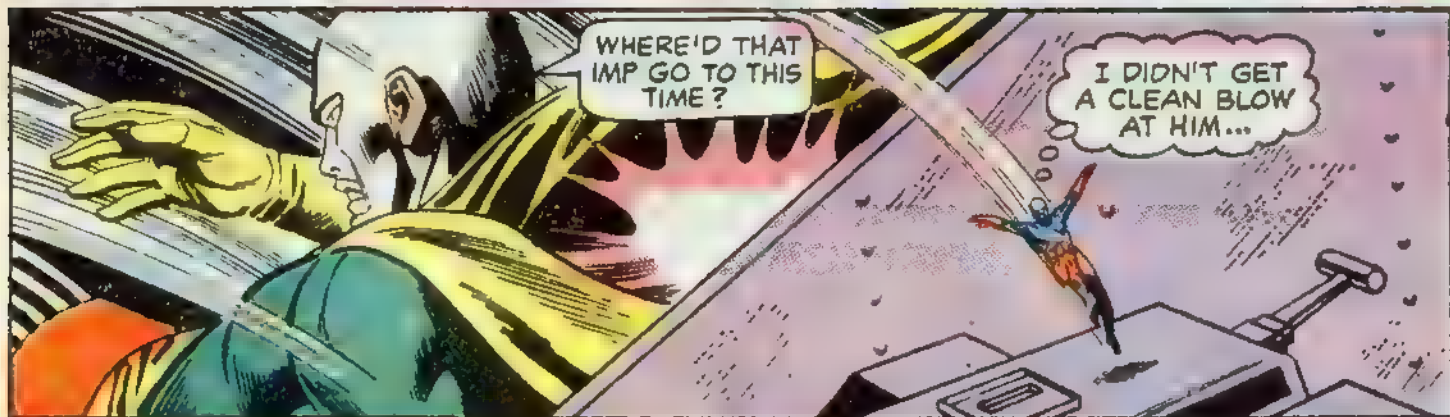
CLOSE ENOUGH
TO HIM NOW TO
TAKE OFF ON
MY OWN!

WATCH
OUT,
CHRONOS!



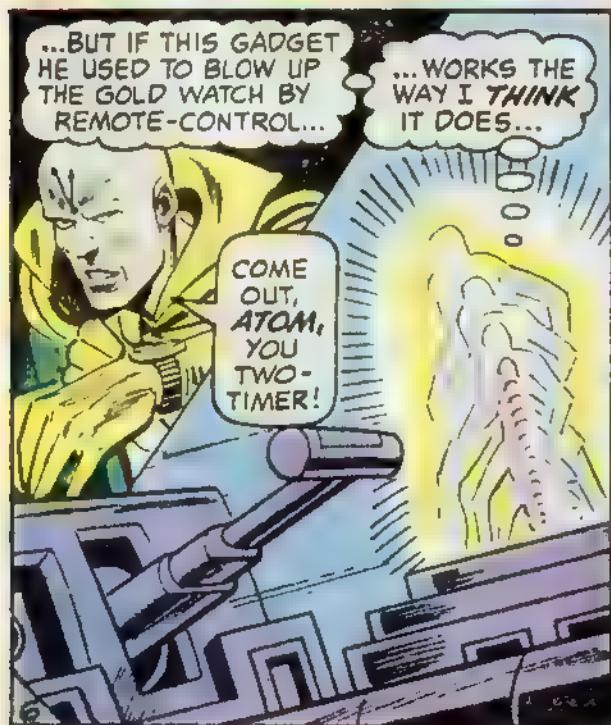
UNGHH!

HE TURNED
AROUND IN TIME
TO MAKE A TARGET
OF HIS NOSE!



WHERE'D THAT
IMP GO TO THIS
TIME?

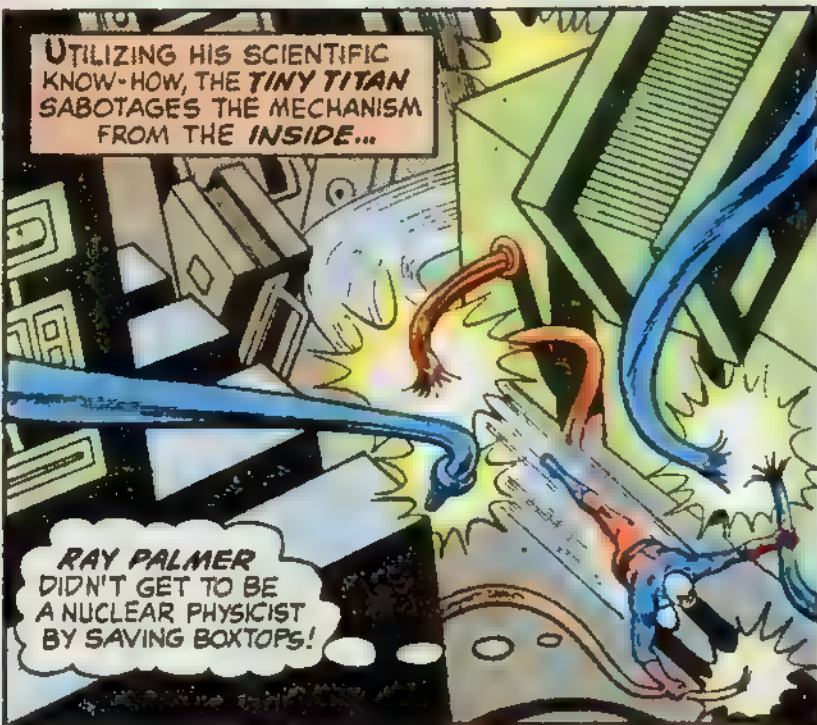
I DIDN'T GET
A CLEAN BLOW
AT HIM...



...BUT IF THIS GADGET
HE USED TO BLOW UP
THE GOLD WATCH BY
REMOTE-CONTROL...

...WORKS THE
WAY I *THINK*
IT DOES...

COME
OUT,
ATOM,
YOU
TWO-
TIMER!



UTILIZING HIS SCIENTIFIC
KNOW-HOW, THE *TINY TITAN*
SABOTAGES THE MECHANISM
FROM THE *INSIDE*...

RAY PALMER
DIDN'T GET TO BE
A NUCLEAR PHYSICIST
BY SAVING BOXTOPS!

THEN, LEAPING OUT TO PRESS DOWN THE MACHINE'S CONTROL LEVER...

THERE YOU ARE! I'LL GET YOU THIS TIME--

I'VE JIMMIED HIS MACHINE NOT ONLY TO BLOW UP CHRONOS' WRISTWATCH WEAPON...

...BUT TO CAUSE EVERY ONE OF CHRONOS' TRICKY CLOCK-GADGETS TO POP OFF!

I'VE STILL GOT ONE MORE TIME-TRICK, ATOM--

URGEPNNH!

WRITE ME ABOUT IT... FROM THE STATE PEN!

ALL THAT REMAINS TO DO NOW IS DELIVER HIM TO THE POLICE...

...AND TRY TO EXPLAIN TO JEAN WHY I'M SO LATE FOR SONNY'S BANQUET!

AND AS THE DINNER-GUESTS ARE TRICKLING OUT OF THE BANQUET HALL...

JEANIE, I...

OH, RAYMOND... JUST IN TIME TO DRIVE ME HOME!-- AND I'LL SIT IN BACK IF YOU DON'T MIND!

I HAD A FINE TIME SITTING WITH MADELYN AND HER HUSBAND...

...AND KAREN WITH HER FIANCÉ! WHY EVEN THE ATOM SHOWED UP TO LIVEN THE PARTY A LITTLE!

GOOD! I DON'T HAVE TO MAKE UP AN EXCUSE BECAUSE JEAN IS TOO ANGRY TO LISTEN TO ONE!

AND THERE WAS MY FRIEND MARLOU WITH HER BOY FRIEND... YES, I HAD AN EXCITING TIME ALONE WITH ALL THOSE COUPLES...

POLICE HEADQUARTERS

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE FIFTH WEEK IN JULY

THE END.



Dear Editor:

I read your letter-writing challenge at the end of your readers' column (Action 423) and I decided to accept. Now to get down to business. First there's the issue's cover. It's one of the best I've seen of Nick Cardy's work. It was a full scene showing drama. Also, for once, Superman's face resembles that of the person I've grown up with and loved for all these years.

The feature story, "Luthor's Hammer of Hate," was great. Luthor is finally sitting down to figure out why he's faced defeat against Superman countless times. It was refreshing to see Supes without full control of all his faculties for a change, too. I knew that Dr. Thames' resemblance to Lex Luthor would have some significance in the story-line when his face was pictured on page 12, panel 1. The Swan-Anderson renderings were almost boringly superb, as always. (Don't call the FBI, you guys—I'm trying to compliment you.) I like the Clark Kent-muttonheaded ninny approach, no matter what anyone else says! It's frustrating, but entertaining!

In the back-up story, which deserves a better name than "back-up feature," Chance (The Human Target) is beginning to look very promising. In "The Shadows of Yesterday Contract" (422) and "The Deadly Dancer Contract" (423), we find that Christopher Chance watched his father die before the gun of a trigger-happy criminal, just as young Bruce Wayne did years ago. To me, Chance is no Banacek. Steve Blades, Dahlgren, Va.

(Okay—we challenged you to write a good letter and you came through—hitting the top of the lettercol! Congratulations—E.N.B.)



Dear Editor:

In discussing Action 423, I will take the Human Target story first. This one was far the best of the HT stories, but it was far from perfect. The thing that saved "The Deadly Dancer Contract" was the thought behind the ending. Not the ending itself, which was cornily and tearfully executed, but the thought.

Now to "Luthor's Hammer of Hate!" What a fantastic start! Luthor thinking why he always lost to Superman. Fantastic! What a great idea! Clark enrolling in acting school was a good idea, too.

However, from this great beginning, the tale rapidly slid downhill. It became corny, cliché-ridden—in short, an abomination.

The first bit of insanity showed up when Superman could not even control his heat vision! Then the reason Luthor uncovered for always losing was at once absurd and frantic. The idea of transferring hate from one person to another and then to a computer, like a hot potato, is absurd and illogical.

Luthor is getting a little tiresome. Since he is a genius and his only criminal motivation is hatred of Superman, all indications were that he should have no reason to kill Superman when that hatred was removed—or, indeed, to continue his life of crime at all.

What I am trying to say, in some dim and random way, is cut the clichés out of your stories! Give them fresh characters, twist endings, abrupt plot changes, or else . . .

Jeff Crawford, Miami, Fla.

(We've been trying new characters, twist endings and abrupt plot changes. Now, where do we find some of this else stuff . . . ?—E.N.B.)



Dear Editor:

Cary Bates has come up with one of the best Lex Luthor stories in a long time. The idea that it is the arch-criminal's all-consuming hate for the Man of Steel which leads to his continual defeat is a good one, even if the Hammer of Hate does seem a bit far-fetched. In addition, the crook posing as Luthor to take advantage of his criminal reputation was a touch of genius. It has often puzzled me why no one ever thought to impersonate some of Batman's or Flash's costumed foes.

I was amused to find that two lettercol correspondents compared The Human Target to TV detectives Mannix and Banacek, especially when this issue's story has Chris Chance playing a fat man a la the tube's Cannon. (What's next? The Human Target in a wheelchair?) In any event, the story was a satisfactory wrap-up of Chris's twenty-year search for his father's killer. Keep up the good work with this series.

Bob Rozakis, Elmont, N.Y.

(Chris Chance could probably get a lot of masquerade-ideas from TV. What a challenge it would be if he has to impersonate Rowan and Martin—TOGETHER—E.N.B.)



Dear Editor:

Shazam! That's what I exclaimed when I saw the cover of Action #423 ("Luthor's Hammer of Hate"). Although the cover was misleading (as covers tend to be on occasion), it was dramatic and a fine piece of art.

Great Krypton! That's what I bellowed when I saw Cary Bates had written the tale I was about to entertain my eyes and brain with. Cary keeps on turning out those great stories so often that I've come to a conclusion: either (1) somebody thrashes Cary until he's forced to write a good story, or (2) Cary Bates is a fine, imaginative writer. I'd choose the latter, wouldn't you?

Brilliant! That's what I uttered when I saw the phony Luthor robbing the bank and Superman disclosing the hoax! A stroke of genius!

Shucks! That's what I sighed as I reached page 15. Too bad such a great story had to come to an end. Cary certainly is earning his pay. The Human Target story was superb, although I didn't like the strip at first. Keep up the good work, Len.

Wow! That's what I'm going to say when I see this letter printed. Get the message?

Clint Thomas, Oak Hill, W. Va.

(Plop! That's not our reaction to your letter, but since you plugged Shazam! we thought we'd add a plug for one of DC's latest mags. Somehow, Strange Sports Stories didn't seem to be an apt exclamation.—E.N.B.)



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J. McBirney



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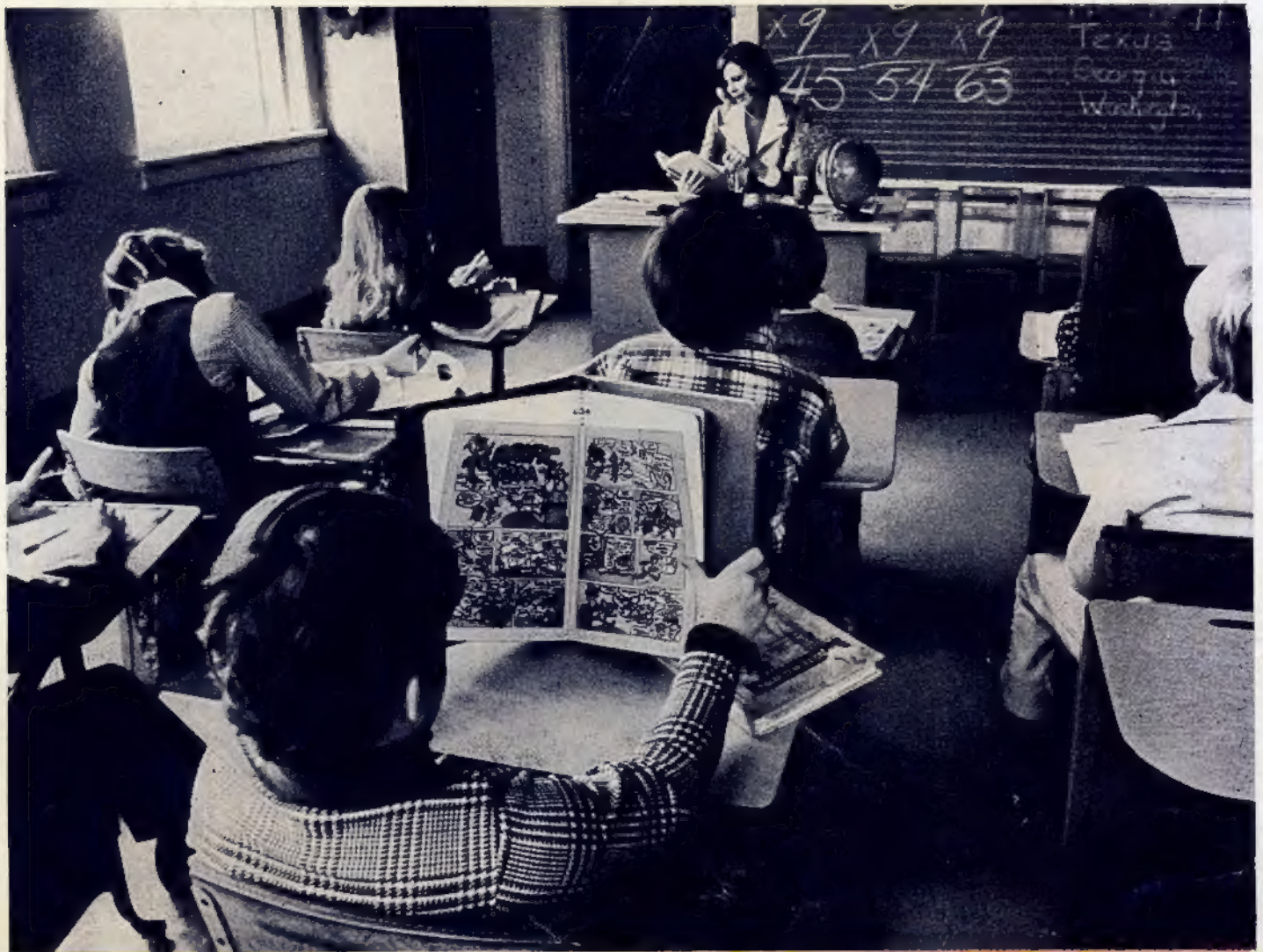
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